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THE KREUTZER SONATA

BY

COUNT LYOF TOLSTOI.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL BY C. CRIEF.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A LETTER FROM COUNT TOLSTOI,

GIVING HIS REASONS WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

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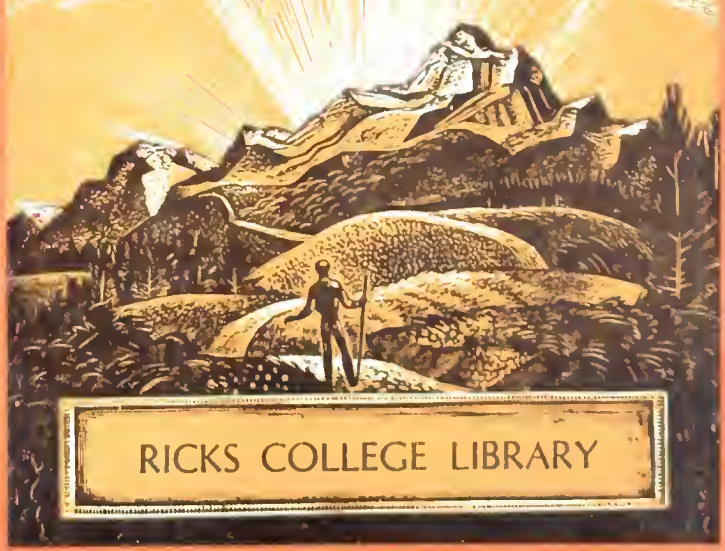

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THE KREUTZER SONATA.

CHAPTER FIRST.

WHENEVER the train came to a stop at wayside stations, people entered and quitted the cars, —all but three travellers, who, like myself, were through passengers. One of these was a lady, neither young nor pretty, having the appearance of being fatigued; wearing a Derby hat, a rather mannish-looking cloak, and puffing a cigarette which she held between her lips.

Her companion was a man of about forty, very talkative and friendly, whose satchels and shawl-straps were neat and evidently new. In a corner the third traveller was crouched, a little fellow, very fidgety, somewhere about middle age, with bright eyes of an undecided color, but very attractive,—eyes that glanced quickly and furtively from one object to another, like a bird.

During the whole journey this little gentleman avoided entering into conversation with his fellow-travellers, as if he wished to shun every approach to acquaintanceship.

When any one addressed him, he answered with cutting abruptness, and gazed absently out of the car window.

Notwithstanding this reticence of manner, it seemed to me that his solitude bored him. He

appeared to recognize the fact that I understood him, and when our eyes met, which happened more than once, because we were seated almost directly opposite to one another, he turned his head away, and shunned my conversation even more markedly than that of his other fellow travellers.

When evening began to fall, and we had arrived at a main station on the road, the gentlemen with the elaborate travelling-equipments, a lawyer as I learned afterwards, got out of the car with his companion, to take a cup of tea at the refreshment-counter. During their absence, some additional passengers got into the coach; among the rest a big old man, clean-shaved, many-wrinkled, and florid, evidently a shop-keeper in a good way of business, dressed in a huge raglan, and wearing an enormous travelling cap. This imposing personage seated himself in the place opposite to the seats that had been occupied by the lawyer and his companion, which were, for the time being, empty, and at once began to chat with a young man, a "drummer," as commercial travellers are usually called, who had got into the car at the same time as the great man. The drummer had remarked that the seats in front had been occupied, and the old man had answered that it did not matter, as he should be getting out at the next station; and so their gossip went on.

My seat was close to these two, and, as the train was at rest, I could not help hearing fragments of their conversation when the other travellers were not talking. First they chatted about the price of goods and the state of the market, then of a lady who was known to them both, and, by and by, of the great fair of Nijni Novgorod. The drummer

boasted of his acquaintance with various people who had got married there, but the old man would not let him pursue that subject, but, interrupting him brusquely, began to recount the weddings that had taken place in former years at Kounavino, at which he had been present. He was evidently proud of his experiences, and was under the impression that they in no wise detracted from the dignity of his appearance and manners. He told with pride that one day, being tipsy, he had kicked up such a fuss at Kounavino that he dare not speak of it save in a whisper.

The drummer roared with laughter, and the old merchant laughed with him, showing his long yellow teeth like an ancient gorilla.

Their bald chat did not interest me, and I stepped out of the car to stretch my legs. At the gate I met the lawyer and his lady.

"You have no time to get anything," the lawyer said to me. "The second bell has rung."

In fact, I had hardly taken my place, when the train started. As I entered the car, the lawyer was talking earnestly with his companion.

The pompous old shopkeeper, opposite to them, was silent.

"And then she declared positively to her husband," the lawyer was saying, with a smile, as I passed by him on my way to my seat, "that she could not nor would not live with him, because—"

And so he went on; but I did not hear the remainder of the sentence, on account of the passage of the conductor, ushering a new passenger to his place.

When quiet was restored, I heard the lawyer's voice again, but the conversation had passed from particular cases to general considerations.

"And then came discord, money troubles, disputes, and the husband and wife separated. Ah, such things did not happen in the good old times. I appeal to you, gentlemen," said the lawyer, addressing the two commercial men, evidently wishing to draw them into the conversation.

Just at this moment the train jerked into motion, and the old man, instead of answering, lifted his hat, made the sign of the cross three times, and muttered a prayer. When he reached the "Amen," he pulled his hat down over his brows, and said:

"Yes, sir! Such things did happen long ago, but not so often as now. As times go, it ought to occur oftener. The world is growing too learned, nowadays."

The lawyer answered something the old gentleman had said, but the train was now rushing along the rails with such a noise that I could not hear distinctly what it was.

Trying to make out what the old fellow was saying, I pressed nearer to him. My neighbor, the fidgety gentleman, was also anxious to listen, and cocked his ear without quitting his seat.

"But where's the harm in education?" asked the lady, with a slight smile. "Was it better to get married in the old way, when the bride and bridegroom never saw each other till the wedding-day?" she went on, after the fashion of her sex, answering more to what she imagined the other was going to say, than to what he had said.

"Then women never knew whether they would love or be loved, and so wedded the first-comer, and were miserable all the rest of their lives. Do you think that way was better than the present custom?" she continued, addressing the lawyer and me, and completely ignoring the old man.

"People are too learned," repeated he, looking the lady full in the face, and leaving her question unanswered.

"I am anxious to know how you explain the connection between popular education and conjugal disagreements?" asked the lawyer, with a slight smile.

The shopkeeper was going to answer, but the lady interrupted him.

"No; those times are over."

The lawyer broke in:

"Let the gentleman explain."

"Because there is no more fear," replied the old gentleman.

"But how can there be marriage without love? We are not animals, to couple at our master's will. We have inclinations, attachments," the lady hastened to say, casting a glance at the lawyer, on me, and even on the drummer, who, standing up and leaning against the back of the seat, was listening to the conversation with suppressed amusement.

"You are mistaken, madam," said the old man. "Animals are mere brutes: man has received the law."

"But how could one live with a man whom one did not love?" said the lady, evidently put to her mettle by the general attention and sympathy.

"In old times such nice distinctions were not made," said the old man, in a deep voice; "'tis only in later days that one's morals and manners have become so liberal. The moment a difficulty occurs now, the woman screams out, 'I cast you off; I won't live with you another minute!' Why, even among the peasants this new style has been adopted. 'Here,' she says, 'take your shirts and

your breeches ; I'm going to live with Yanka ; his hair is curly and yours is straight.' Just go and talk to them. The first and best rule with women ought to be fear."

The drummer looked at the lawyer, the lady, and myself, expressing his evident desire to laugh, and ready to mock at or to approve the sentiments of the shopkeeper, as the others might take them.

"Fear ! Of what ?" asked the lady.

"Fear of her husband, of course."

"Oh ! There's an end of that."

"No, madam, there can never be an end of that. Such as our Mother Eve was, when she was torn out of the side of man, so she will remain till the end of the world," said the old man, shaking his head so positively and severely that the drummer, deciding that the victory was with him, burst into a ringing laugh.

"Yes, that is like all you men !" answered the lady sturdily, and turning towards us : "you have fought for your own liberty, and gained it, but you would keep us in slavery. You can do what you like, but we women—"

"Men are different."

"Of course, man has the inestimable advantage of being born without a reputation."

"Clever, but not original. You forget that if a man does wrong, no consequences ensue ; but if a woman, a wife, strays from the right path — ah ! woman is a fragile bit of porcelain," the shopkeeper continued in a severely moral tone.

His authoritative manner impressed his audience —even the lady felt herself crushed, but she would not yield.

"You will allow, I hope, that a wife is still a

human being, and has feelings as well as her husband. What is she to do if she does not love her husband?"

"Not love her husband!" the old man repeated stormily, with a frown; "then she must be made to love him."

This unexpected argument tickled the susceptibilities of the commercial traveler, and he gave vent to a murmur of approval.

"Oh, no!" that won't work. Love cannot be forced."

"And suppose a woman deceives her husband, what is to be done then?" put in the lawyer.

"That must not be," said the old man; "the husband must keep his eyes open."

"But sometimes that does happen, in spite of his vigilance."

"Yes, among the upper classes, but never with us," answered the old man. "And even if a husband be imbecile enough to be unable to govern his wife, at least he will not have robbed her. But let there be no scandal. Love or no love, keep the home clean. A husband can always make his wife obey. His physical strength will always ensure that. It is only a fool who lets his wife wear the breeches."

There was a dead silence. The drummer, who was not willing to remain in the background, was the first to break it, and with his perpetual smile, began:

"Now, with my governor: — there was a bit of a scandal! and it is not easy to make out the rights of it. You see, the woman loved amusement, and that's why she began to go crooked. The governor is a serious, sensible man. At first he tried

to bring her to reason by kindness. That had no effect; she went from bad to worse. She stole his money. Then he tried chastisement, but all in vain; she grew unbearable. She carried on an intrigue with an unbaptized pagan Jew (under your favor be it said). What could the governor do but send her adrift, and resign himself to lead a single life? As to the woman, she is going the pace, under full sail."

"What an idiot he must be!" said the old man. "If, from the first, he had made her toe the mark, she would have kept straight. The curb should be put on at the beginning. A horse and a woman must be well bitted."

At this moment the conductor came to collect the tickets for the next station. The old gentleman gave up his.

"Yes, yes; the feminine sex must be kept under, or there will be no peace in the family."

"And how about the weddings at Kounavino?" asked the lawyer, with a roguish leer.

"That's quite another affair," said the shopkeeper, severely.

"Adieu!" he added, rising from his seat. He gathered his raglan about his portly frame, raised his cap, and, seizing his travelling-bag, left the car.

CHAPTER SECOND.

No sooner had the old gentleman gone than the conversation became general.

"That old fellow is a patriarch out of the Old Testament," said the drummer.

"He's a regular Demostroy,"* said the lady. "What antediluvian ideas he has about women and matrimony!"

"Yes," observed the lawyer, "we are a long way off modern notions yet, at least in marital affairs. The rights of women, free choice and divorce—these are questions not settled with us."

"The most essential of all, and that least understood by people like that man, is that marriage is no marriage except it be consecrated by love."

The drummer listened smilingly, fixing the conversation in his memory, so as to make use of it when he had a chance.

"What sort of love is it that marriage consecrates?" asked the voice of the silent and nervous man in the corner, who had approached us without our perceiving it. He was standing up, with one hand on the seat, and, plainly, much moved. His face was flushed, a vein in his forehead was swelled, and the muscles of his cheeks were trembling.

"What love is that which is consecrated by marriage?" he repeated.

"What love?" answered the lady.

"The common love that binds husband and wife."

"And how can a common love sanctify marriage?" continued the nervous man, with a dissatisfied air. He looked as if he were going to say something unpleasant to the lady. She felt it, and appeared troubled.

"Why, easily enough," said she.

The nervous man caught her words on the hop.

"No, not so very easily."

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*The Demostroy is the marriage-code of the times of Ivan the Terrible.

"Madame would say," put in the lawyer, "that all marriages ought to be the consequence of a mutual attachment—of love, if you choose to call it so, and that marriage is sacred only when love is present. No marriage that is not based upon love can be morally obligatory. Is not that your meaning?" he asked the lady.

She nodded her assent to this expression of her idea.

"Therefore," began the lawyer, taking up his parable again.

But the nervous gentleman, evidently containing himself with difficulty, without giving the lawyer time to finish, asked:

"Yes, yes! But what are we to understand by this love that alone can consecrate marriage?"

"Everybody knows what love is," said the lady.

"I don't—and I should like to hear you define it."

"That 's easy enough," said the lady.

She reflected for an instant, and then said:

"Love! Love is the exclusive preference of one to all others."

"And how long is this preference to last?—for a month, or a day, or half an hour?" exclaimed the nervous gentleman, with sudden irritation.

"Excuse me, sir; we evidently are not speaking of the same thing. A preference for one above all others."

"Now I ask, for how long?"

"For how long? Why, forever, of course!"

"But that happens only in romances. In real life, never. In real life the preference of one above all others lasts for a few years, or months, or weeks. Oftener a few days, or even hours."

"Oh no! no! Certainly not! Absurd!" all the three exclaim in unison, and the drummer gave a monosyllabic denial.

"Yes, I know," cried the nervous man, louder than any of us. "You all talk of what you believe to be; I talk of what *is*. Every man feels what you call love whenever he meets a pretty girl. If she be not his wife, you know the old saying,— 'Our friend's wife is an angel,— our own is a mere woman.'"

"But that is horrible to think of. You can't deny that the sentiment of love does exist: that love which lasts not for months, or years, but for life."

"I do deny it emphatically! Even if Menelaus had been faithful to Helen, that would not have kept her from preferring Paris. It was, is, and ever shall be thus. I tell you it cannot be otherwise, no more than in a bushel of dry peas, two peas with a certain special mark should place themselves side by side, and stay thus. Satiety must come, either to Helen or to Menelaus. The only difference is, that it will come to the one sooner than to the other.

"To love anybody for the whole of one's life, is to say that a candle will burn forever and ever, without wasting."

"But you are speaking of mere physical love; will you not admit that there may be affection founded on conformity of thought, on spiritual affinity?"

"Possibly! I will not deny it. But in that case is it necessary to cohabit? (excuse the vulgarity)! How is it that this spiritual affinity never comes to old people, but always to the young and hand-

some?" said the old man with a disagreeable laugh.

"Yes, I maintain that true love, so far from consecrating the purity of marriage, as children and fools believe, really degrades it."

"Pardon me," said the lawyer, "but the facts contradict you. We see, every day, married couples leading a long life of fidelity."

The nervous gentleman smiled sadly "What then? You say that marriage is based on love, and when I express a doubt of the existence of any love not originating in sensuality, you attempt to prove the existence of love by marriage. But now-a-days marriage is nothing more than violence and falsehood!"

"Pardon me," exclaimed the lawyer. "I only asserted that marriage has existed, and exists still."

"But how, and why, does it exist? It exists only among people who look upon it as a sacrament, or bargain, between man and God. It exists for them, but for us it is nothing but hyprocrisy and brute force.

"We feel that, and, to make ourselves easy and comfortable, we preach free love; but free love is nothing more than a return to sexual promiscuousness, which is mere fishing in the dark." (Excuse my plain speaking, he said, bowing to the lady.) "The ancient foundation is uprooted; we must build another, but we need not preach debauchery."

He spoke so warmly, that his audience kept an astonished silence.

"However, the situation is terrible in the extreme. People admit that we must not fish in the dark. We must, by some means or other, regulate our sexual relations; but there is but one way, the

ancient plan, and nobody believes in that any more. People marry after the old fashion, without the faith that sustained it; and what results? Brute force and hypocrisy. When it is merely hypocrisy, things go smoothly enough. Husband and wife deceive each other and the world by pretending to be monogamous, while in reality they are polygamous, and polyandrous. That is wrong, but it may pass. But when, as often happens, the husband and wife have taken upon themselves the obligation to live together all their lives,—I'm sure I don't know why, nor do they either,—and they find, after the second month, that they would far rather live separate, but notwithstanding this natural desire, continue to cohabit, then comes that state of things when people fly to drink, or shoot themselves, or kill each other!" All kept silence; we felt ill at ease.

"Ah, yes! these critical episodes do arrive in married life. For example, the Posdnicheff affair," said the lawyer, willing to turn the conversation. "Have you heard how he killed his wife for jealousy?"

The lady said that she had not heard anything about it. The nervous gentleman said nothing, but changed color. After a pause he said suddenly:

"I see that you have guessed who I am."

"No! I have not that pleasure."

"The pleasure is not very great, I am Posdnicheff!"

Deep silence. He blushed, then grew pale again.

"After all, what does it matter? said he. "Pray pardon me, I do not wish to be in the way," and he sat down in his corner.

CHAPTER THIRD.

I ALSO resumed my seat. The lawyer and the lady continued the conversation in an undertone. I kept silent. I wanted to talk, but I did not know exactly how to express myself, and so passed an hour, till we reached the next station.

There the lawyer, the lady, and the commercial traveler got out. Posdnicheff and I were alone!

"What they have said is all lies, or else they do not understand what they talk about," said Posdnicheff.

He sank on his knees, and clasped his temples between his hands.

"Love, marriage, children,—lies, lies, all!"

He got up, pulled down the shade curtain of the lamp, lay down on the cushions, and closed his eyes. A minute passed.

Then: "You don't like my company, now that you know who I am?"

"I have no such thought."

Do you want to go to sleep?"

"No, not at all."

"Then would you like me to tell you my story?"

Just then the conductor passed through the car. Posdnicheff followed him with suspicious eyes, and did not speak until the man had gone.

Then he began, and continued talking, never ceasing; not even the entrance of strange travelers stopped the stream of his reminiscences.

His countenance changed with his story,—the

face of one minute was not the face of the next. His eyes, his mouth, his moustache, nay, his very beard took new forms,—still it was always a handsome and touching face, but in the advancing twilight, a dissolving view of emotions.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

"LISTEN, and I will relate to you my life's history, and the horrible tale it involves ; horrible, very horrible. The story itself is more terrible than the *denoument* resulting therefrom."

He paused, passed his hand across his forehead, and commenced : "Since I do tell it, I might as well dwell on every act of my life. How and why I married, and how I lived prior to my marriage. First of all, who I am.

"I am the son of a wealthy land owner, and marshal of the nobility of the Steppes. I attended the university, studied jurisprudence and graduated with a decree. I married in my thirtieth year. But before I talk to you on my marriage, I will tell you what kind of a life I led before embracing matrimony, and what observations I made of family life. Prior to marriage I led the life that all the so-called respectable men of our circle lead, that is, a life of profuseness in vicious indulgence. Nothwithstanding, like the majority of this society, who live unrestrained by the law of morality, I was personally satisfied that I had an irreproachable character. The exalted idea I possessed of my own morals arose from the fact, that in our immediate family

there were no wanton examples of dissoluteness, generally to be found in the circle of property owners; and because I had been reared in a home where the exalted poetical dream of family happiness had been nursed into my soul. My father and mother were true to each other. My wife was to be perfection itself. Imposing and sublime our mutual love was to be—the purity of our conjugal life to be stainless. Such were my projected hopes, and I often later marveled at the sublimity of my expectations. Ten years passed.

"And still I hurried not to get married, and led what I called a well regulated bachelor life, a bachelor life which I boasted of to my older friends and colleagues, who lent themselves to the pursuit of vicious pleasures. I was not a seducer, betrayed no such inclinations. Dissipation was not the main object of my life. I squandered, lavished, and licentiously sought my pleasures, and still was convinced of my harmlessness, and believed myself moral. The women I associated with were not mine; they granted me but the pleasure I asked for. In this I recognized no wrong. On the contrary, from the fact that I did not approach them with love, but remunerated them, I believed myself moral. I avoided women who, by means of presenting me with a child, or attraction for my person, could have chained me to them. No doubt children and attraction for my person existed, but I made believe I knew it not.

"And living thus, I believed myself an honorable and moral man. I did not then comprehend that debauchery does not simply consist of immoral physical acts, and that physical opprobrium does not establish licentiousness, but that debauchery is

established when there are no moral ties with the woman one has sexual intercourse with. It was this absence of moral responsibility I especially rejoiced in. I recollect how once I bothered myself, because I did not remunerate a woman, who had no doubt done it for love. I felt eased after sending her the money, and thereby shirking all moral rerponsibility.

"Do not shake your head, as if you agreed with me," he suddenly exclaimed. "I have been there. Every man, even you, unless you are a rare exception, have exactly the same views as I had then. Even though you agree with me now, formerly you thought differently. So did I, and if I had been told then—but you have just heard from my lips, there would not have happened to me what has happened. Nevertheless, pardon me," he continued, "believe me, it is horrible, very horrible! most horrible. This whirlpool of transgressions and debaucheries in which we live stands in ratio to the true question of woman rights—"

"What do you understand by the true question of woman rights?"

"The question, how that from man a differently organized being is constituted, and how woman should view herself, and how man woman."

CHAPTER FIFTH.

"Yes, for ten whole years I lived a most free life, having mistresses innumerable, dreaming meanwhile of the noblest love, yet constantly sinning in the very name of love.

"Yes, I will tell you how I killed my wife, but I must tell you how my very nature was first degraded.

"I KILLED HER BEFORE I EVER SAW HER!

"I killed woman the first time I tasted voluptuousness without love!

"It is only after having suffered, and being tortured by one's conscience, as I have been, that it is possible to comprehend the enormity of my crime.

"Thus it was that the great drama that has entered into my life first began.

"I must go back to my sixteenth year, when I was at college with my eldest brother. At that time I had never known but good of woman, but, like many unfortunate youths, I was soon to lose that respect and veneration which is the foundation of manliness in man.

"My moral nature was thoroughly depraved. I ignored all that was good in me, and gave myself up to solitude, and the vice peculiar to solitude; and I was wrerched, for I was no longer pure!

"The thought of woman tortured me, perverted my imagination, ran riot within me. I lived in vague terror, and I prayed to God for relief.

"Hitherto I had sinned alone, but the last step remained to be taken; I had dragged no other being with me to perdition. I might have been saved, if a friend of my brother, a gay young student, one of those fellows who are called 'jolly good fellows,' 'boon companions,' 'genial, wholesouled boys,'—in other words, 'good-for-nothing scamps,' who had already taught us to play cards and to drink—had not taken advantage of an evening of dissipation to drag us into still deeper abom-

ination. My brother, as innocent as I, fell that night. And I, a lad barely sixteen, not only soiled my own soul, but helped to smirch that of a sister woman, without knowing what I was doing. No one had even told me that I was doing wrong. True, there are ten commandments between the boards of the Bible, but they are only made to be recited before priests and tutors, and not nearly of as much importance as are the rules of grammar—at least, that was our impression concerning them.

"I had never heard my elders, for whose opinions I had a due respect, speak of concupiscence as a sin. On the contrary, I had often heard it boasted of. I was told that, once gratified, my passions would leave me in peace. I was told so, and I had read it in books. My elders said *that health required it*, and all my companions seemed to believe that it was something to be proud of. As to any danger of infection—that was the government's business—that point was guarded against. It regulates the concerns of the houses of prostitution. It assures the safety to young and old. Salaried physicians are employed to guard them from the natural consequences of their sexual intercourse and indulgence. It is all of a piece. We are told that incontinence is good for our health, and therefore prostitution is made lawful. Why! I know mothers who take care that their sons' health shall not suffer from too much virtue. Science itself canvasses for houses of prostitution.

"Science! how can that be?" I asked.

"Are not physicians the high priests of science? Who perverts young people by prescribing sexual intercourse? Who teaches women how to avoid having children? Who cures the guilty when the

sin overtakes them? The doctors! the priests of science."

"But why should we not succor the sick?"

"Because to cure the malady is to encourage its cause. It is on a par with all foundling hospitals."

"But —"

"If one-hundreth part of the care was taken to cure the sin that is wasted to cure the sickness, disease would have died out long ago. All our efforts are devoted, not to extripate debauchery, but to favor it by guaranteeing the safety of sinners. But to return to my own case. I fell, not because I was seduced by the natural attraction of a woman, but because I was surrounded by people who looked upon this degrading vice as a natural function, useful to society, and an agreeable amusement, not only excusable in a young man, but innocent. I rather praised myself upon having done a fine, manly action; and I continued to enjoy my new-found pleasure—as one of the proper things to do as a young man of fashion, just as I learned to drink, or to smoke. It was a mighty fine thing to keep a mistress.

"However, in this first fall there was something peculiar and pitiful. I remember that all at once, even before I left the room, a profound melancholy came over me, and I felt as if I wanted to weep, —to weep over the loss of my innocence, over the eternal loss of my relations with women. Yes, they were gone forever. Pure thoughts, pure actions with regard to women were extinguished. I had become a voluptuary; and a voluptuary is in the same condition as a tobacco smoker, a drunkard, or a morphine fiend. Like the morphine fiend, the drunkard and tobacco smoker is no longer man in

his natural state, so the man who has known promiscuous love with women is no longer a normal man.

"As one can recognize a drunkard or an habitual smoker by their physiognomy and their manners, one can also know a voluptuary by the way he looks at a young woman. By the loss of his simple, pure, and fraternal manners toward women, he is branded forever. I had become a voluptuary,—I remained one.

"When I remember all my evil and cowardly actions, I am disgusted. Yet all my companions jested and laughed at me for what they called my innocence.

"When I think of the men of fashion, military men, professional men,— I myself,—who have on our consciences so many terrible crimes against women, and yet have the audacity to marry at thirty, I am astonished. We go into a drawing-room or to a ball clean shaved and scented, with exquisitely got-up linen, in evening dress or uniform, as models of purity. Shame! shame! A time will come when all these pretenses will be unveiled. That was the life I led up to thirty years of age, never for a moment abandoning my intention to marry and settle down to a respectable and conjugal life, and with that idea I sought out those young girls whom I thought would suit me. I, a moral ulcer, dared to mate with all that was pure. One after another I rejected; they did not come up to my ideal. At last I found one I thought was worthy of me. She was the daughter of a landed gentleman of Penza, formerly very rich, but now ruined by unfortunate speculation.

"To tell the honest truth, she and her mother

determined to capture me—and succeeded. All sorts of traps were laid, and one, a moonlight excursion on the water, decided my fate.

"The moonlight shining on the river, the beautiful girl sitting close to me, her exquisite figure set off by a close fitting jersey, that showed all its charming contours, and the perfumed ringlets of her hair that were carried by the breeze across my face, overpowered me, and I jumped to the conclusion I had found my ideal. It seemed to me on that lovely evening that she reciprocated my thoughts and feelings, and my thoughts and feelings were both in the highest strain of romance.

"In reality, it was her jersey that fitted her so neatly, and the wavy hair, and also the subtle intoxication that comes from propinquity.

"I went home enthusiastic, persuaded that she realized the highest perfection of my dream, and the next day I asked her to be my wife.

"We may say what we like, but we live in such an abyss of falsehood, that if we are not brought to our senses by a blow over the head, as I was, we never wake to a sense of the truth. What nonsense it all is! Out of a thousand men who marry, not only in the upper classes but also among the people, you will hardly find one who has not been married before a dozen times.

"It is true that there are, as I have been told, pure and beautiful youths, who feel that marriage is not a joke but a serious matter. May heaven prosper their belief! But all the same they are like a white crow, which is so rarely found. Everybody knows it, yet pretends ignorance.

"In every romance you find described the sentiments of the characters, the puddles, the briers

through which they struggle; but when it comes to describing Love, not a word is whispered of what went before. Not a breath about disreputable connections, of servant-girls tempted, nor a hint as to the wives of other men that have been ruined.

"And if any audacious author dare to describe these things, his books are tabooed. Everyone makes believe in the presence of young ladies that these naughty things do not exist, or at least only among the characters described. They make believe with so much earnestness, that they even convince themselves. And as to the young girls, they take it all seriously, just as my unfortunate wife did.

"I remember that after we were engaged I showed her my diary, in which she could learn a little of my past, especially my latest adventure, which I feared she might discover by the gossip of third parties. In fact, that was the only reason for reposing such confidence. I shall never forget her horror, her despair, when she had learned and understood all. She very nearly broke off our engagement. What a pity she did not!"

Posdnicheff was for a moment silent, and then resumed:

"After all, it is better as it is, much better. Besides, what does it matter? It is only the poor young girls who are deceived; as to the mothers, they know all about it, their husbands have taken care of that; and though feigning to believe in the purity of young men, in their innermost soul they know better.

"None know better than these mothers how to suit the bait for the fish they want to catch. We men sin through ignorance, and are ignorant because we are unwilling to learn; as for women,

they know well enough that the noblest, the most poetical love, as we call it, depends not upon moral qualities but on physical intimacy, on the manner of dressing the hair, or the color and fit of the gown.

"Ask an experienced coquette who has set herself to captivate a man, which of the two she would prefer: to be in presence of her victim convicted of lying, ill-temper, and cruelty, or to appear before him in an unfashionable gown or an unbecoming bonnet. Be sure she will prefer the first. She knows well enough we are only lying when we talk of high-flown sentiments. She knows that all we want is the possession of her beauty, and for the sake of that we will pardon almost anything. But she also knows that we should never forgive a badly designed or ill-fitting costume.

"But she knows the reason of all this, while the maiden has only an instinctive sense, like that of an animal. That is the reason we see these horrible jerseys, these artificial protuberances behind, these naked shoulders, arms, and busts.

"Women, especially those who have passed through the school of marriage, know very well that all these discussions on those high-flown subjects are simply words,—words with no meaning in them. All that man wants is the body, and that which adorns the body, and they take their measures accordingly. If we throw aside conventional forms, and look at life as it really is, we shall see it is nothing more than a vast market for vice. You don't agree with me? Well, allow me to prove it.

"You will say that women of society live in a different sphere, and have other interests than

women of the town. I deny it, and shall show you my reasons. If beings differ from each other according to their objects of existence and according to their interior life, the difference should be reflected on their exterior life. Now compare the miserable, despised, lost woman with the woman of the highest classes; they wear the same gowns, they have the same manners, the same perfumes, and same exposure of arms, neck, and bosom, the same protuberance behind, the same passion for jewels, the same amusements, dance music, and song. Both classes draw men to them by all means in their power; there is absolutely no difference. NONE!

"Logically speaking, it must be confessed that temporary marriage is despised, while its prolonged existence is honored.

"As for me, I was caught by a jersey, a bustle, and a wealth of wavy hair."

CHAPTER SIXTH.

"MY capture was the more easy, because I had been brought up under the same artificial conditions as a cucumber under glass. Men of our class are like engine-boilers: the moment you close the safety-valve (that is to say, the forced self-restraint of a young man from open vice for the time being), an explosion must necessarily ensue. For the most part, all our idyllic ideas of marriage are the consequence of full feeding. You wonder at this? I am surprised you have not perceived it before. Not far from my place, this spring, some peasants

were working on a railroad. You know what a peasant lives on—black bread, *kvass* and onions. With this frugal diet he is active, strong, and thinks nothing of the easy labor of the field; but working on a railroad his bill of fare is increased by a liberal allowance of *cacha* and a pound of meat a day. Under this *regime* he can push loads of twelve hundred pounds for sixteen hours a day.

"But we who gorge ourselves with a couple of pounds of meat a day, besides game and pastry,—who absorb all kinds of heating drinks,—how do we expend our surplus of energy? In sensual excess. As long as the safety-valve is open there is no danger; but once close it, as I did for a little while before my marriage, and an ebullition will result, which, enhanced by romance reading, poetry, music, and a lazy, luxuriant life, will soon bring love up to boiling-point. That is how it was with me. I fell in love like everybody else. I experienced all its transports, all its tenderness, all its poetry; but at the bottom of all this was the mamma and the dressmaker.

"If it had not been for the moonlight on the water, the exquisitely-fitting jersey, and the wavy ringlets—if my wife had been dressed in an ill-fitting sacque, and I could have seen her as she really was, I should have remained heart-whole.

"Observe now this universal lie, the manner in which marriages are brought about. What need there be more simple? The fruit is ripe; it must be plucked if the girl is not a monster, and she finds a man willing to marry her. 'Oh, no! that's not enough'! Here commences the second lesson.

"Formerly, when a maid reached the marriageable age, the parents, who loved their daughters as

well as themselves, arranged the matter. That was the universal custom, as it is still among the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Turks, and even among our own peasantry; that is the custom in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred all over the world.

"It is only we epicures in marriage who flatter ourselves we have found out a more refined plan; and what do you think that plan is? It is simply to set out the marriageable girls in rows like tulips, and to pick and choose. The girls wait and think, but dare not say, 'Take me, young man, take me!' 'I 'm the nicest!' 'Just look at my shoulders, examine my hair, remark my complexion!' We men walk up and down, and select the goods according to our fancy; and yet we talk about the rights of woman, of the freedom of the sex, and other such topics, to please the gallery."

"But what are we to do?" said I. "Is it a woman's place to make the first advances?"

"I am sure I don't know; but if there is to be equality of the sexes, let it be real equality. We have found out that to contract marriages through the means of the matchmaker is humiliating to woman. Yet it is a thousand times better than the present system. By the former, both chances are equal; by the present, woman is a mere slave, exposed for sale in open market. But, as she cannot bend to her condition, nor make advances herself, she resorts to another deception still more degrading. This is sometimes called going into society, sometimes amusing one's self; but in reality it is nothing more nor less than plain husband-hunting.

"Only just tell a mother or a daughter that they are hunting men just as we hunt a fox — heavens! what a rage they will fly into. Yet that is what

they do, and the only thing they can do. Oh, it is terrible to see young, innocent girls possessed by this sole idea. How much better if they spoke out plainly, instead of beating around the bush, like this :

" ' Oh, yes, the origin of species ; how very interesting !'

" Or, ' Oh, yes ; Lilly takes great interest in painting.'

" Or, ' Were you at the Exposition ? Was n't it truly delightful ?'

" ' And the Troika, and the shows, and the symphony of Beethoven; I adore Beethoven.'

" ' My Lizzie is quite music mad,'—and through all this bald chat one idea prevails:

" ' Take me !' ' Take my Lizzie !' ' No ? Then take me—only try.' "

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

"Do you know," suddenly exclaimed Posdnicheff, "that this woman power from which the world is suffering—"

"What ! woman power ?" said I. "Why, women are always complaining that *they* are under complete subjection."

"Precisely ; that 's it," he broke in; "that is just what I want to say ; and that explains the extraordinary phenomena that, while in one way she is kept in the lowest degree of humiliation, in another way she reigns an absolute sovereign. Look at the Jews, with their money power. They avenge themselves on their oppressors as women

do. 'You are determined that we shall be nothing but traders. Be it so; we will trade — *in you!*' say the Jews. 'You are determined that we shall be nothing but objects of your sensuality. Be it so; by that very sensuality we will conquer you,' say the women.

"The real wrong of woman is, not that she is deprived of the ballot nor excluded from the bench, but that she is deprived of the right to her own body; the right of choosing instead of being chosen. You think that a terrible doctrine, don't you? But so long as women is deprived of this right, and finds herself forced to govern man through the agency of his passions, it is evident man chooses nominally, but woman chooses in reality. So long as she possesses this power, she is the mistress of the situation.

"But how does this power betray itself?

"In everything. Look at the shops of any large town — millions of them. It is impossible to estimate the amount of business that is done, and yet in nine-tenths of these shops there are no articles kept for the use of man. All this luxury is provided for woman's benefit alone. Count the factories. By far the greatest number are employed upon articles for woman's use and adornment. Millions of men, generations of slaves, die, work like convicts, to satisfy the caprice of woman. Women, like queens, keep nine-tenths of the human race in abject slavery. And why? Because man has deprived them of their just rights. They avenge themselves upon our voluptuousness. They catch us in our own net.

"That's the whole of it. Woman has forged for herself, out of her charms, a weapon so powerful

that no man, whether young or old, can resist her. Look at our balls, our receptions. Woman knows well the influence she wields. You can see it in her triumphant smiles.

"The moment a young man meets a woman, he falls under her influence and loses his head. For a long time past I have felt uneasy when I saw a woman too well dressed, whether it be a woman of the people, with her red shawl and her skirt tucked up through her pocket-holes, or a woman of society dressed for a ball. But now the sight fairly terrifies me. I see the danger to men; I see something contrary to law, and I am tempted to call the police.

"I am not joking; the time will come, and perhaps soon, when the world will wonder how any society can exist wherein such vile actions are permitted as those which appeal to our sensuality by such excess of personal adornment.

"It is worse than digging pit-falls in the public streets for the unwary to fall into.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

"THAT was the way I was caught. I was what people call in love. Not only did she appear to me an angel, but I looked upon myself as 'a rare and perfect chrysolite.' It is a sad fact that there is no wretch so low but that he can find one more degraded than himself, and pride himself upon his superiority. That was my case; I had not married for money, or for powerful connections, as I have known many to do. I was rich, she poor. I

had not married to continue the polygamous life of a bachelor. I honestly intended to be faithful to my wife, and plumed myself on my virtue.

"I was simply a cad who thought himself a Bayard. Our engagement did not last long, but short as the period was, I look back on it with shame and disgust.

"It is commonly reported that love is a moral sentiment, a community of soul, rather than of sense. If that be the case, this community of soul ought to appear in our intercourse. But it did not. On the contrary, we found it extremely difficult to keep up a conversation. A conjugal chat was a labor of Sisyphus. Scarcely had we discovered what we wanted to say, and had begun to express it, than we found ourselves run dry, and at a search for a new subject. We had literally nothing to talk about. All our future intentions, our plans concerning our new life, had been worn threadbare. If we had been mere animals, we should have known there was no occasion to talk; but being human beings, we felt constrained to converse, while we had nothing to converse about, *for our minds were full of something that was impossible to express.* In fact, we were like animals 'in heat.'

"And that ridiculous custom, continually eating sweetmeats; that gluttonous craze for sugar; the tiresome preparations for the wedding, discussions with "Mamma," rooms, bedrooms, furniture, and linen! When one married according to the ancient fashion, which the old gentleman who has just left us praised us so much, all these house-keeping details had a halo of sanctity thrown over them; but nowadays out of ten married couples you will hardly find one who, I won't say disbelieves, in the

sacrament (whether they believe or not makes no difference to us), but who intend to keep their vows. There is scarcely one man in a hundred who has not been married before for a longer or shorter term, and not one in fifty who has not made up his mind to deceive his wife. The great majority look upon this visit to the church as a condition necessary to the enjoyment of a certain woman. What an important part these material details must play in the bargain! Is it not like an auction in which a virgin sold to a rake is crowned with flowers?

CHAPTER NINTH.

THAT'S the way everybody gets married. I followed the fashion. If young people who dream about the honeymoon only knew what a bore it is, what a delusion! I cannot imagine why people think it necessary to deceive each other.

"One day I was taking a walk in Paris, and I dropped into a sort of side show, over which a flaming sign announced that the great bearded woman and the wonderful amphibious dog were to be seen within. The woman was a man disguised; the amphibious dog was a common cur sewed up in a seal'a hide, swimming in a bathtub. The whole thing was a fraud; but as the Barnum of the show bowed me out, he addressed the exterior public, and called me as a witness. 'Ask this gentleman how he was pleased. Come up! Come up! Only one franc'; and in my confusion I had not the courage to say there was nothing to see except the pictures outside, and they could be seen for noth-

ing ; and it was just on this false shame that the Barnum counted.

"The same thing happens to those who have passed through the tortures of the honeymoon. They don't like to confess how greatly they have been disappointed,—and that was what was the matter with me.

"The delights of a honeymoon are all in the imagination; in reality it is a bore, an unmitigated bore ! It is like what a boy feels with his first segar ; his stomach revolts, but his pride forces him to swallow his misery and to pretend to enjoy it. The pleasure of smoking and the pleasure of loving, if they come at all, come after the first attempt. Married people must be educated in vice before they can taste its sweetness.

" *Vice !* " said I, " you are speaking of one of the most natural things in the world."

" One of the most *unnatural* things in the world ! I call it, and I am no saint. For any young girl who is not utterly perverted, the consummation of marriage is as repulsive as it would be for children. My sister was married very young to a man twice her own age, and a mere debauchee. I remember how astonished we were on the night of her marriage. She fled from her husband's side, pale, with tears streaming down her face, and trembling in every limb, and crying out convulsively that she dare not tell what he had tried to do.

" Natural ? It is natural to eat ; that is an agreeable function that brings no shame with it. But the other is brutal, disgusting, and painful. No, it is not natural. I am convinced that an innocent young girl never loses her horror of it. A pure young woman longs for one thing, and one thing only—children—not for a lover."

"But," said I in astonishment, "the world must be peopled."

"I do not see the necessity."

"But the human race could not exist."

"Then let it perish. Schopenhauer, Hartman, and all the Buddhists say that the only real good is the Nirvâna, the Non-Existence ; and they are right in the sense that true human happiness consists in the abnegation of 'self,' only they do not express themselves accurately. They say that humanity ought to resolve itself into the infinite Void to escape suffering ; that the chief blessing to man is annihilation. But the chief end of humanity cannot be to avoid suffering by annihilation, because suffering results from action, and action cannot suppress itself. The chief end of man and of humanity at large is happiness ; and to obtain that, there is one law that must be obeyed. This law is the union of beings.

"This union is obstructed by the passions, and the strongest and the vilest of passions is sexual love. Because, if the passions disappear, and corporeal love with them, this union will be accomplished. Then humanity will have fulfilled its destiny, and have no longer reason to exist."

"What is to become of humanity while it is obeying the law?"

"There is always the safety valve, the token that the law is not accomplished, and that sexual love still exists. Through this love, generations will be born, of which one will fulfill the law. Then the human race will cease, for it is impossible to imagine life and perfect union as coexistent.

CHAPTER TENTH.

"A STRANGE theory!" cried I.

"Why strange? According to the Church, the world must come to an end. For once science agrees with the Church, and comes to the same fatal conclusion. Why is it thus strange that the moral doctrine should bring about the same result? Let those who can, contain. 'But, if they cannot contain, let them marry. It is better to marry than burn,' said Paul, and I take this passage literally as it is written.

"In order that people may remain moral, even in their sexual relations, they must set up as an example complete chastity. But in striving towards that aim, man must mortify the flesh. Once he arrives at the degree of self mortification, we may have the truly moral marriage.

"But if man, as in the present state of society, looks for mere physical love, he clothes his desire with pretext under the form of marriage, and it becomes nothing more than legalized debauchery. He will never know anything but the life of immorality, to which I gave way myself, and forced on my wife; that which we call domestic happiness. Reflect how perverted one's ideas must be, when the greatest happiness of man, liberty and chastity, is looked upon as a thing at once pitiable and ridiculous; when the highest ideal of woman, purity and virginity, provokes jeer and laughter. How often do young girls sacrifice their purity to this Moloch of public opinion, and marry men utterly

beneath them rather than remain maids—that is to say, superior beings. Rather than continue in that state of ideal perfection, they throw themselves away.

"But I did not comprehend then, nor do I understand now, that those words of the Gospel, 'He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,' did not only allude to the wives of others, but notably and above all to our own. I did not understand it, and I never doubted that all my actions during this honeymoon were perfectly virtuous, and that to satisfy one's desires with one's own wife was eminently chaste. But understand me, now, that I look upon this hiding from the face of men, that young married people indulge in, with the approbation of their parents, is nothing more nor less than a license to indulge in unlimited gratification of their lust.

"I saw nothing evil or shameful in this; and, looking forward to hitherto unknown rapture, I began my honeymoon. But nothing came of it. Still I had faith. I would have what I bargained for, cost what it might. The more I forced myself, the less I succeeded. I was anxious, ashamed of myself, and disappointed. By-and-by I began to be unhappy. I think it was on the third or fourth day that I found my wife melancholy, and asked her the reason. I took her in my arms, which I thought was the true way to comfort her, but she pushed me away and began to weep.

"What caused her tears? She could not tell me. She was nervous, out of sorts. Probably this very nervousness had suggested to her the ignominy of our relations to each other. But she

could not find words to express her feelings. I began to question her. She answered that she was fretting for her mother. Her words did not ring true. I tried to console her without talking of her parents. It did not strike me that she was simply overcome, and that the fretting after her mother was simply an evasion. She paid no attention to me, and I accused her of caprice. I began gently to chide her. She ceased crying, and reproached me bitterly for my selfishness and cruelty. I stared at her. Her features expressed hatred—hatred against me. I cannot express the horror I felt at this sight. 'What!' thought I, 'love is the union of two souls, and my wife hates me! Me? Oh! it is impossible. She is not herself!'

"I tried to calm her. I found I was fighting an indestructible and cold hostility, and, without taking time to reflect, I showed my anger.

"We said unkind things to each other. The impression of this first quarrel was terrible. I call it a quarrel, but that is not the proper word: it was the sudden opening of an abyss between us. Our love had spent itself in excessive sensuality. We looked at each other, disenchanted, like two selfish beings who had striven for more than they could endure—the roses of whose life had withered in their grasp.

"Thus, what I have called our quarrel was our true position brought to light after our passion was exhausted. I did not for a moment imagine that this cold hostility was natural to us, but thought that this first quarrel would soon be drowned in a tide of sensuality. I believed that we had disagreed, that we were reconciled, and that such a quarrel would not occur again. But in this very

honeymoon a period of satiety arrived when we ceased to be necessary to one another, and a new quarrel broke out.

"It was evident that the first did not come by chance. 'It is all over,' I thought. This second quarrel astonished me the more, that there was no just reason for it. It was some miserable question of money, and I never haggled on that score: meanness was not part of my nature. I remember only, that in answer to some remark of mine she insinuated that I wanted to domineer over her by the power of my money, and it was on that score I based my only right over her. In fact, something so extremely stupid and base, that it entered neither into her character nor mine.

"I lost my self-control, and accused her of want of delicacy; she said I was a brute, and the dispute grew warm. In her words, in the expression of her features, in the flashing of her eyes, I saw again the hatred that had stupefied me before. I have quarreled with a brother, with friends, with my father; but never had I experienced such coarse malignity. However, time passed, and this mutual detestation was once more inundated with a flood of passion. And again I consoled myself with the thought that these scenes, though very annoying, were not serious,

"But at the third and fourth repetition I saw that it was no accident, but a fatality which must return. I was no longer frightened—I was simply astounded that it could really be I who lived on such bad terms with my wife. A state of things existed that I did not observe in other families. I did not know that in all households they, like myself, imagined that it was a misfortune exclusively reserved for them,

and carefully concealed a disgrace not only from others, but from themselves, as if it were some contagious malady.

"That was what happened to me. From the very first days this misery grew greater and greater, bitter and more bitter. In the bottom of my heart I felt I had been trapped, that I was in a position I never expected to be, and that my marriage was not a blessing, but a curse. Like everybody else, I refused to acknowledge this; and I should not have confessed it even now, but that the end has come. I am astonished that I did not realize my true situation. However, it was easily to be seen in the face of these continual quarrels, caused by such trivial motives, that when they were over one could not remember how they had arisen.

"As it often happens in our joyous youth, when, for want of something to laugh at, one laughs at one's self, we could find no reason for our mutual hatred, but detested each other simply because our animosity boiled over. Stranger still was the absence of reason in our reconciliations.

"Sometimes there were words, explanations, even tears; but often, I well remember, after the most insulting expressions, tacitly came kisses, caresses, and—abomination! How could I be blind to such contemptible weakness!"

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

"EVERY one of us, men and women, are brought up in those aberrations of sentiment, miscalled love. From my very childhood I loved. I loved in my youth, and was happy in loving. I had got it into my head that love was the highest and noblest part of our nature. But when manhood brought the reality, and I gave willing way to it, the bubble burst. In theory, love is glorious; in practice, it is ignoble, a thing which it is equally disgusting to talk about and to remember. It is not for nothing that nature throws her veil over it. But man pretends that which is low and shameful is noble and pure.

"I will tell you briefly, and without shuffling, what were the first signs of my love. I gave myself over to bestial excesses, without shame, rather with pride, never thinking of the inner intellectual life of my wife. And not only did I forget her intellectual life, but even her physical. I wondered at the origin of our enmity, and yet, after all, how clear it is! This enmity was nothing more than a protest of human nature against the brute who assaulted it. It could not be otherwise. Our hate was like that of accomplices in crime; for was it not a crime that when this poor woman had begun her pilgrimage of maternity, her footsteps should be clogged by the weight of man's brutality?

"You fancy I am straying from my subject. Not at all. I simply relate the events which led to the

murder of my wife. The fools! They believe I killed my wife on the fifth of October. But I had slain her long before, as they are slaying theirs at this moment. Understand well, that there is a general idea in our society that woman is made for man's delight, and perhaps the other way; but I only speak of my own case. 'Wine, women and song,' that's the way the poet puts it. Wine, women and song, *Hoch sa sa!*

"If that were all! Take all the poetry, the painting, the sculpture from Pouschkine's 'Two Little Feet' to the Venus di Medici, and you will see that woman has never been anything but a toy —in hovel and palace she is equally pitied and despised. But what a horrible idea! If it were not a coarse expression, one might say woman is a delicate morsel; but chivalric man swears that he adores her (he adores her as ministering to his gratification); then everybody professes to honor her; some yield up their seat, some pick up her handkerchief, others recognize her right to all kinds of employment, even to participation in the government; but in spite of all this, the essential point remains the same. She is and always will be an object of desire, and she knows it. It is mere slavery; for what is slavery but the labor of one for the pleasure of others? To secure emancipation, people must refuse to enjoy the work of others, and to look at it as a shame and a sin.

"In reality the case stands thus: the exterior form of slavery is abolished; women are no longer sold at public auction; and people assert and imagine that slavery exists no longer. They do not wish to know that it flourishes still, because as always people like and think it good and just to profit

by the labor of others. This being granted, there are always plenty of people who, by strength or stratagem, make profit by other people. The same thing happens with the emancipation of women. At the bottom, feminine serfdom consists in her employment as a plaything. She is flattered, she is given all kinds of rights and wrongs, but she is always looked upon as an object of pleasure, and brought up as such from infancy, as far as public opinion goes.

"She is the humble and crafty servant, man always her irresponsible master. To abolish slavery, public opinion must admit that it is unfair to tread on other people, and for the enfranchisement of woman public opinion must look on the idea of using her as an instrument of enjoyment as shameful and unfair.

"The emancipation of woman must commence, not in the courts of law, not in the legislative halls, but in the bed-chamber. Prostitution must be combated, not in its public haunts, but at home; or else, with the help of some unscrupulous quacks, women will strive to prevent conception, and will sink, not to the level of the brute, but to the level of a wretch who for the most part is sickly, miserable, and hysterical, without hope, without self-respect."

"But why?" I asked.

"The most wonderful thing of all is that nobody seems to understand it, a thing so plain, so evident that even a doctor might see it, yet nobody wants to understand it. Man lives for pleasure, and despises the first law of nature, — children. But children are born and become obstacles to his pleasure, therefore man searches out the means to avoid

these obstacles. Three plans have been struck out. First, by turning woman into a monster, by inducing that which should be her greatest misfortune,—sterility. Then the man may continue to enjoy himself without fear. Seeond, polygamy, not open and above board, like that of Turks or Mormons, but our infamous secret polygamy, full of lies and deceit. Third,—but the third plan will not bear the light of print, and yet it is committed every day by people of the highest respectability. We pretend there is something evil in the first two plans, but the last we look upon as a means to limit the too great increase of the family, while its effect on woman is still worse than that of the others. Woman with us is expected to be at the same time mother, mistress and nurse, but her strength is not equal to this triple function.

"From this come hysteria, nervous diseases, and among peasants, 'demoniac possession.' Observe that this possession never exists among peasaut maidens, but only with wives, and wives who live with their husbands. The reason is clear, and the cause of the moral degradation and humiliation of the woman is clear also.

"If people only considered what a wonderful work is gestation! In the mother is formed the being which is to continue our line, and this holy work is obstructed and made painful—by what? It is horrible even to think of it; and yet people talk of liberty, of the rights of woman. It is like cannibals fattening their prisoners to eat them, and promising these wretched victims that their rights and liberty shall be respected."

All this was new to me, and I was lost in astonishment.

"But if this is so," said I, "it follows as a natural consequence that a man can love his wife only once in every two years; and as man—"

"'Man wants his wife,' so the doctor and the clergy say. Tell a man he needs tobacco, brandy, and opium, and he will believe you. The necessary deduction from this is, that the Creator has not arranged matters properly, because without asking advice from priests and doctors, He has contrived things thus. Man has need of woman, therefore he is permitted to satisfy his needs; and yet his satisfaction is obviated by the birth and nourishment of children.

"What is to be done, then? Ask the priests, they will tell you; they know all about it. Oh! when shall these rascals have their lies thrust down their own throats? We have had enough of them; we go mad, we blow out our brains, all through their teaching;" and how can it be otherwise?

"It is said that animals know that their different species are perpetuated by descent, and that in this respect they follow a well-defined law. It is only man who does not and will not know this fact. He cares for nothing but his own pleasure, the King of Nature—Man! Note well that the beasts of the field couple only when they can reproduce their species; but the ignoble King of Nature couples whenever he is so disposed; and, not content with this, he dignifies this simian proclivity with the name of love. He kills one-half of the human race. The woman, who ought to be his helper in the great movement of humanity towards liberty, he makes not a friend, but an enemy. Who is the clog upon the progress of humanity? Woman! And why is she so?"

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

"MAN is many degrees below the brute, when he descends from his throne. That was my case, and the worst of it was, that, not allowing myself to be led astray by strange women, I flattered myself that I was leading a perfectly virtuous life, that I had become a truly moral individual, and that all our disagreements were to be attributed to my wife's habit of mind and her temper.

"But plainly the fault was not with her. She was only like everybody else. She acted according to her lights, according to the principles in which she had been brought up, in common with other young ladies of the upper classes.

"How often do we hear or read of the condition of woman as she is, as contrasted with woman as she ought to be. But what is it all but vain speaking? Woman's education is but the result of her tacitly acknowledged vocation, and that is, to please man! From her childhood, she is taught nothing but such things as will make her agreeable to her master. From her childhood, she dreams of nothing else.

"Woman is trained for man's delight, as the serfs used to be trained for his service.

"You may say that all this applies only to girls of the upper classes, and not to the ordinary sort; but feminine education in all ranks has but one purpose—to catch men. Some tempt by music, or rippling tresses; others by science, or the domes-

tic virtues; no matter how, so they be tempted. Fancy a course of science for women only, that is to say, one in which men would know nothing about it. I fear the classes would be thinly attended. No education can alter woman's nature, so long as her highest ambition is marriage, the legalization of sensuality.

"When one considers the conditions of female education, one cannot be surprised at the loose living of our fashionable ladies.

"It would be a wonder were they chaste.

"Just follow my argument. From their earliest years our women live in an atmosphere of luxury, dress, jewels, neatness of person, dance, music, poetry, novels, song, theatres, concerts, public or private, according to whether they are executants or audience. Add to all these complete idleness, a succulent diet, a surfeit of sweets.

"Heaven only knows how the poor excited creatures suffer from feverish longings. Many are cruelly tortured by importunate desire, even in their teens, and even after, if they are not married at twenty. We try not to see this, but we are not blind. Most of these wretched girls are kept in such a nervous state by suppressed sensuality, that they are burdens to themselves, and seem to exist only in the company of the other sex. Their lives are passed either in coquetry, or in getting ready for that sport. When men are present they are preternaturally lively; when men are absent, they are dull as ditchwater; and not only does the company of one particular man stir their lagging spirits, but that of any man, provided he be not hopelessly old and ugly.

"You will object that cases like these are ex-

ceptions. I answer that they make the rule. Only some girls betray, others control themselves, but no woman lives for herself. Man is their master—their God.

"He is the oak, they the ivy. How can it be otherwise, when the feminine ideal of both maids and matrons is to bring as many men around them as they can, which arises from the animal instinct, that leads the female to try to attract the males, so that they can pick and choose according to their fancy?

"Only one thing can suppress or interrupt this tendency. Children—and then only when the mother is not a monster—that is to say, when she does not devolve the highest privilege of maternity upon a servant,—and here again the doctor steps in.

"My poor wife wished to nurse her own children, and did so at first; but, unluckily, it happened that our first infant took sick. The doctors stripped the little thing, punched his poor little body all over, and discovered that my wife was in danger if she continued to nurse it; so she was deprived of the only sure remedy for coquetry, and I was to be grateful, and to pay them for undermining my honor! We took advantage of the poverty and ignorance of a woman to rob her infant of its natural sustenance for the sake of our own child.

"From that moment my wife's dormant instinct of coquetry woke up, and I was delivered over to the fiend of jealousy once more, but this time his talons were blunted.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

"JEALOUSY is another of those hidden things in marriage known to everybody, but concealed by all. As well as the mutual hatred of man and wife, which results from their guilty complicity in the crime of smirching humanity, there are still other causes, but the incurable wound of wedlock is jealousy. But, by tacit agreement, that is a thing never to be mentioned in polite society. Each victim imagines that it is his peculiar misfortune, and not the common destiny of man; it was so with me, and it could not be otherwise. Jealousy must always exist where people lead an immoral life. If they will not sacrifice their pleasure to the well-being of their child, they justly conclude that neither will they sacrifice their pleasure; I do not say their own well-being and fair-seeming before the world (since one can sin in secret), but for conscience alone. Each one knows very well that neither admits great moral motives, not to betray them, because in their mutual relations they fall short of the purity demanded of them by the moral code, and ever after they suspect and spy on each other.

"What a vile sentiment is jealousy! I do not speak of well-founded jealousy; that is misery, but there comes an end to it; but of that unconscious jealousy which always accompanies immoral marriage, and which, having no beginning, can have no end. This sort of jealousy is horrible—horrible, that is the only word for it.

"For instance, a young man speaks to my wife, smiling at her, and, as it seems to me, examining all her good points. What right has he to speak to her, what right has he to imagine a romance of which she is the object, and why does she not resent such freedom? Not only does she not resent it, but she likes it. She will even go out of her way to please him; and such a flood of hatred wells up in my soul that every word she speaks, every glance she casts on him, every gesture she makes, drives me wild.

"She sees it, she does n't know what to do, and tries to cover her confusion with an air of indifference. And I fancy that my uneasiness pleases her,—that she is merry, because I am sad. My hatred redoubles itself, but I dare not give free vent to my anger, because at the bottom of my soul I know that there is no real cause for it; and I keep quiet, pretending indifference, and exaggerating my attention and politeness towards *him*.

"Then I begin to hate myself. I want to quit the room, to leave them to themselves, and I go. But no sooner am I out of sight and hearing than I am filled with fear of what may pass during my absence, and I come back with some pitiful excuse. Sometimes, even, I dare not enter the room—I linger near the door, I play the eavesdropper. How can she degrade herself and me by forcing me to such humiliation? And what must *he* think? He thinks as I should have thought in my bachelor days; he thinks me a fool, and chuckles to himself as the thought passes through his mind, 'It 's my turn now!'

"This state of mental fever is unendurable; once I suspect a man of casting lustful eyes on my

wife, that man offends my sight as if his face had been scarred by vitriol. Nevermore can I treat him as a fellow-creature, nevermore can I look at him without rage in my eyes.

"How many times have I covered my wife with this moral vitriol, this jealous hatred that degraded and disfigured her! At each access of my causeless anger I have snatched in imagination the bridal wreath from her brow, and changed the bridal veil to a mantle of shame.

"I torture myself with impossible suspicions. To my shame, I confess I suspect that my wife, like the Sultana in the Arabian Nights, betrayed me with a slave, deceived me under my very eyes, and laughed at me. Thus, at every new flood-tide of jealousy (I mean, always, causeless jealousy) I was dragged into the current set up by mean suspicion, and added continually to its violence. She did likewise. If I had cause to be jealous, how much more reason had she, who knew my past, cause to suspect me. And her jealousy was more galling than mine. We were miserable each in our own way.

"The situation stood thus: Our life was like a mountain lake, sometimes calm and sluggish, at others lashed to fury. At one moment I might be contented, happy; the next, some trifling remark would ripple the surface, by degrees a storm would arise, the lightning flash, and all would be commotion. Then I would seek to calm the tempest by changing the conversation. But the mischief was done. She would answer me in monosyllables, always hinting at some past action of mine. By and by I would find out that the reason for all this irritation was simply that I had strolled awhile in

the garden with her cousin, to whom I had never given a passing thought. But what could I say? A word would only confirm her suspicions. I questioned her, she would not answer, but she knew I understood, and her doubts of me were confirmed.

"'What ails you?' 'Nothing, I am just as well as usual,' and then she would say all the ill-natured things she could possibly think of.

"Sometimes I would keep my temper, at others I would fly into a rage, then our mutual irritation would spend itself in torrents of abuse. We would accuse ourselves of imaginary crimes, she would burst into a flood of tears, and fly from my presence into some hiding place known only to herself. I would seek for her all over the house, ashamed before the servants, mortified before the children.

"There was nothing to be done; she had lashed herself into fury, and there was no knowing what she might not do. At last I find her, and then would come days and nights of torture; till, after the most cruel accusations, we would calm down into treacherous peace, the result of nervous prostration.

"Yes, jealousy, causeless jealousy, was the condition of our life of conjugal debauchery. I was always unhappy, but on two occasions my misery was intensified. One was after the birth of our first child, when the physician objected to my wife nursing her infant. I was particularly jealous, first of the natural uneasiness that my wife experienced in common with all animals, when the regular course of life is broken in on; but above all I was jealous because, having seen how easily she was induced to abandon the moral duty of a mother, I fancied, perhaps unconsciously, that she would as

easily abandon the duty of a wife; all the more because she was in excellent health, and in defiance of the dear doctor's orders, fulfilled her maternal duties whenever caprice so moved her."

"I perceive that you do not like the 'dear doctors,'" said I, having observed the contemptuous-emphasis of voice and expression with which Posdnicheff spoke of these learned men.

"I neither like nor dislike them. They have ruined my life, as they have ruined the lives of millions before me, and I cannot help looking from the effect to the cause. I understand that they, like lawyers and other professional men, must make their living somehow; and I would have willingly given the half of my fortune, as others would, if they knew as much as I do, on condition that they would keep their distance, and not mix themselves in my affairs. I am not a statistician, but I know dozens of cases where doctors have killed—sometimes an infant in its mother's womb, on pretense she would die in childbirth (and nevertheless the same woman bore many children afterwards with perfect safety), sometimes the mother herself under the pretext of a so-called operation. The world takes no account of these assassinations, just as it took no account of the cruelties and murders committed by the Inquisition, because they are supposed to be perpetrated in the interest of humanity. Innumerable as the stars in heaven are the sins of doctors. But all their crimes are nothing compared to the materialistic demoralization with which they poison the world through woman. I do not speak now of that materialism that refers everything to microbes and bacteria, and instead of tending to the preservation of humanity would

lead to its dissolution. According to these theories, everybody should live in a perpetual quarantine, with a disinfecting pad under his nose ; although, by the way, scientists have discovered now that even that is ineffective. But I will give them the benefit of the doubt. This supreme poison is the perversion of the human race, and above all of woman.

"You can't say in these days, 'Your life is evil, reform it,' because doctors will tell you that the cause of evil is derangement of the nervous system, or a lesion of something, somewhere! And you hurry to consult them, and for a fee, graduated according to their position in the profession, they will prescribe drugs from the apothecary which you swallow with a wry face. You get worse and worse, you consult another doctor, he will say that the former treatment was all wrong and will give you quite a new variety of nauseous doses, and your mind is relieved, and your body—well, never mind about your body.

"But to return to our subject. I told you that my wife made an excellent nurse, and that the bearing and the suckling of children—and I use the word children in its widest sense—soothed my pangs of jealousy, but on the other hand provoked suffering of an entirely different kind.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

"One after another children made their appearance without loss of time, and the same thing happened as always happened where there are children and doctors. Maternal love—what a cruel punishment it is. Offspring to a women of society bring neither joy, pride, nor a sense of duty done. On the contrary, it brings dread, uneasiness, interminable suffering, punishment. Women say so, think so, and feel so. Children to them are instruments of torture; not that they are unwilling to bear, to nurse, and cherish them,—for the maternal instinct of woman is very strong, at least of women like my wife,—but because children may sicken and die. Women love their offspring, and love is the parent of fear for the health and life of their children. That is why so many mothers refuse to nurse their offspring. If I nurse my child, they say, I shall love him too much. One is tempted to think that they would have preferred children like India-rubber dolls, who would never get sick, who would never die, and could always be mended. How these poor brains are muddled! What will they not venture, to avoid the penalty of maternity, and the love for their children!

"Love, the soul's best blessing, comes to them in the guise of danger. Because when man falls short of the highest attributes of manhood, he descends lower than the brutes. Woman can see nothing but beauty in her child. She brings him

into the world in pain and travail ; but what pretty little fingers, what dainty little feet, what a sweet smile ! its dear little body, its cunning little coo, and oh ! how it crows ! In a word, maternal feeling is animal, sensual, according to one view; but in another, the mysterious appearance of a new human being that shall take our place when we are gone has nothing of the material about it—it is spiritual.

"There is nothing of all this in what is said or done in the baptism of a child. Nobody believes it, and yet it is nothing more nor less than a reflection upon the true human meaning of a newborn being.

"We have thrown aside all that, but we have put nothing in its place, and there remains only the baby's robe, its laces, its little rosy fingers, its delicate little feet, and other bodily charms which it shares with the young of the lower animals. But the lower animals have neither imagination, nor forethought, nor reason, nor doctors,—especially doctors.

"Among poultry or cattle, the chicken droops its head, the calf dies, the hen clucks awhile, the cow moos, and they live on their vacant, forgetful existence. With us if a baby fall sick, then is the doctor to be called in, the nurse to be engaged, and the whole house disturbed. If it dies there are no more little rosy fingers, no more pretty little feet ; and then to what end all the suffering endured at its birth ?

"The mere animal has no imagination, and cannot torture itself by thinking how it might have saved its offspring if it had only done this, that, or the other. And its grief, which is merely physical,

lasts but a little while; it is only a passing regret, and not that deep-seated feeling born of idleness and satiety that rises to the pitch of despair. The brute has not that logical faculty which seeks the '*wherefore?*' Wherefore endure all this agony, wherefore waste all this love on creatures that must die? The brute cannot draw the very natural deduction that it is better never to have offspring than having them to lose them."

"But, then, what must one do, according to your view of the case, to rear children after the human fashion?"

"Simply to love them after man's fashion."

"Do not mothers love their children?"

"Not as men do; at least not often. Not even as dogs do; and this is the reason that the love of a fowl, a mare, or a she-wolf will always appear to a woman as an unattainable ideal of true animal affection. A woman will not attack an elephant who has seized her child, but a hen will not hesitate to fly at a dog, and give up its life in defense of its offspring. But take note of this: woman has the power of restraining her physical love for her children, but the lower animals have no such power. Does that mean that in this respect woman is the inferior? No. She is the superior, or, rather, she is totally different. She has other duties,—human duties. She can restrain her animal love, and transform it into spiritual love. This is the part of the true woman, and this is just what one never sees in society. We read of acts of heroism, achieved by women who have sacrificed their children through exalted motives of faith or superstition. But these things seem to us as stories of an antique world, in which we have no part.

Nevertheless, I believe that if a woman have not an ideal to which she can sacrifice the mere animal sentiment, she will waste herself in chimerical efforts to preserve the mere bodily health of her children, aided in this task by her medical attendant, and she will suffer the inevitable consequences of her folly.

"Thus it was with my wife. Whether there be one child or five, the feeling is the same. Perhaps five are better than one. Life is embittered by fear for one's children. Not only on account of their real or imaginary illnesses, but even by their very presence. I know that during all my married life my comfort and happiness depended on the health, the well-being and the education of my children. Parents have no rights that children are bound to respect. A regular, orderly life has no charms for the young, and so domestic happiness hangs by a hair. Fancy being told suddenly, without adequate preparation, that little Basil has a pain in his stomach, or that Lizette has an attack of the croup. Instantly everything is abandoned; everything forgotten. Nothing is thought of but the doctor, warm baths, and an even temperature. You can't converse with a friend, without being interrupted by little Peter anxiously asking if he may venture to eat some green fruit, or if it is absolutely necessary for him to change his shirt. Or else it is the nurse maid rushing in, with a baby screaming violently for want of its regular meals.

"The orderly family life is completely upset. What matters it how *you* 'live, move, or have your being.' Nothing matters but the health of the litttle ones, and, thanks to the doctors, who strive to restore that health, mostly with no effect, your life is made a burden to you. Scarcely has one danger passed

than another appears, and all the fuss begins anew. You feel like a man in a ship floundering in mid-ocean. Sometimes I have suspected that the whole thing was got up by my wife to intimidate me, because she never failed to turn the situation to her own uses. I have fancied that everything she said and did at these times was meant for my subjugation, but now I know that her only thoughts were for her children.

"The situation was painful for us both; but for her, her babies gave her the means of forgetting everything else in a sort of mental intoxication. I have noticed that in her most melancholy fits she seemed quite relieved when one of her children fell sick, and she took to nursing as some take to drink. Nothing was heard but how Madame So-and-So had lost all her children, poor soul, and Madame Such-a-One's only child was saved by Dr. Bolus, whose skill was really wonderful, and that another family of our friends had only preserved their children's lives by changing their apartments. And the doctors, with solemn faces, confirmed all this rubbish, and backed my wife manfully. She would have kept up very well had she been left alone, but the medical men recited such a litany of sewer gas, blood poisoning, malaria, diphtheria, and the Lord knows what else, that they drove her to distraction; and then, pocketing their fees, departed placidly, with a sense of professional duty well performed.

"In the old times, women consoled themselves with the belief, 'The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!' They consoled themselves with the thought that the soul of the departed had returned to Him

who gave it. That it was better to die in innocence than to live in sin. If women nowadays had such a comfortable faith to support them, they might take their misfortunes less to heart; but, alas! faith has gone out of fashion with powdered hair and patches. But still, as human nature must believe in something, they believe in physic, and not only in physic, but in physicians. One pins her faith on Dr. X, another on Dr. Z, and so on all through the alphabet. And, like all the faithful, they are blind to the folly of their belief; like the ancient Christian Father Tertullian, they believe because it is absurd: they have faith because it is impossible. And, indeed, if they did not have this abiding though ignorant faith, they would perceive that all the prescriptions of these professional quacks were nothing but 'words, words, and again words!' with a cabalistic figure in the upper left-hand corner of the paper. Scarlet fever is a contagious malady; so when one lives in a large town half the family must fly to a hotel (we have done it twice); and yet there is not a man in the town who is not a central point, round which circle an innumerable quantity of microbes, distributing all sorts of disease. There is no getting out of it. 'The butcher, the baker, and the candle-stick maker' are all emissaries of the great monarch death.

"And I take it upon myself to assert in the name of every man who has rooted up his household gods in the vain attempt to flee from infection will find himself in the position of the farmer of Ruegen, who, leaving his house to escape the annoyance of a domestic Kobold or brownie, was surprised to hear from the bottom of a churn, in which the malicious fairy had concealed himself,

and which he had just loaded on the cart, a hollow voice, exclaiming, 'Well, farmer, we are all moving you see!' But that's not all: Everybody has heard of rich people who, after an epidemic of diphtheria, have burnt up all their goods, moved into newly built houses refurnished from cellar to garret, and yet took the disease and died. And yet, who has not heard of people who have lived in continual contact with contagion and go scot free? Look at hospital nurses, they seem to be infection-proof. Gossips are more dangerous than microbes. One old woman will boast of a splendid doctor that she knows of, another ancient dame will claim that he had killed several of her friends, and so the scandal spreads. Yet another physician, who has no more knowledge than the first, who studied in the same schools, who kills after the same formulas, but keeps his carriage and charges double the fees, and they will all sing his praises while the novelty lasts.

"And all because woman is like a wild rose, charming to look at, but untrained. She has lost her belief in God, and put her faith in the doctor who charges the highest fee. Else she would know that disease is not so very terrible, because it can not affect what alone is worth loving—the soul. The worst that can happen is what we all must submit to—dissolution of this body. Without faith in God, woman's love grovels in the mire; all their energies are concentrated to prolong an existence that must end sooner or later, but which fools believe the doctors can prolong indefinitely.

"So it came about that children, instead of softening the relations between us, drove us still further apart. The older they grew, the more they

caused continual disputes. Each of us had a favorite; mine was the eldest boy Basil, hers the youngest daughter Lisette. When these children were of an age when character begins to show itself, we dragged them into our quarrels. The poor children were none the better for this, but in our continual bickering we never thought about them. The little girl was devoted to me, but the boy, who bore a striking likeness to his mother, both in mind and person, often added to my irritation against her.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

"For a while we lived in the country, afterwards in town, and if misfortune had not overtaken us I should have lived to old age a fairly happy life — not too happy, but just happy enough. But I was as well off as my neighbors. I should never have known that abyss of misery, of falsehood, and shame into which I was doomed to fall. I knew well enough that I, a man who according to my ideas ought to be the master, wore petticoats instead of my proper habiliments. But the children kept me in slavery; I longed for freedom, but they bound me in fetters. Leaning on her children my wife was supreme. I did know then she could not be otherwise, because when we were wedded she was morally my superior, as every young girl must be superior to man, because she is purer than he. What a strange thing it is, that most women we meet are either middling or bad, unprincipled, selfish, garrulous,

and capricious, while the ordinary young girl is charming and inclined to everything that is beautiful and good. Why should this be? Because the husband drags her down to his own low level.

"If boys and girls were born equal, girls would be much better off. In the first place, a girl is not exposed to the same lowering influences as a boy; she has neither cigarettes, nor wines, nor cards, nor dissipated associates. And above all, she is corporeally pure. Therefore, when she marries she is superior to her husband, superior from the mere fact that she is a young girl, that when she reaches womanhood in our state of society, in which she will not have to work for her living, she will maintain her superiority as wife, mother, and nurse.

"The wife who brings children into the world, nourishing them at her bosom, perceives clearly enough that her part in life is more important and far more serious than that of the man who sits in the councils of the Emperor, or on the bench. She knows that in these positions money is the one thing needful, and that money can be got in all manner of ways, and in any case is by no means so absolutely and fatally necessary as the nourishing of the child; thus the wife of necessity is superior to the husband, and thus entitled to rule. But the husband is not of my opinion on this point; not only does he refuse to recognize the wife's superiority, but he looks down on her from his superior bodily altitude with lordly contempt.

"My wife despised my political labors, because she bore and nursed our children; and I, on my part, looked upon woman's work as a pitiful thing, only fit to be laughed at. Apart from other motives, we were separated by our mutual contempt.

Our relations became more hostile day by day, until we arrived at that state when not only disagreement provoked dislike, but where dislike encouraged disagreement. Whatever she said, I contradicted; whatever I asserted, she denied. Towards the fourth year of our marriage we were tacitly agreed on one point only,—that we could never agree on the most simple subjects. We held to our own opinions with obstinacy. Among strangers we would talk upon all sorts of subjects, but in private we were dumb. Sometimes in hearing wife talk brilliantly with other people, the thought would strike me: What a liar that woman is, to be sure! And I wondered that the person she was speaking to did not find her out. Our conversation, when alone, never extended beyond that rudimentary language that I am convinced all animals of the same species are capable of using to each other. 'What o'clock is it?' 'It is time to go to bed.' 'What's for dinner today?' 'Anything in the paper?' 'We must send for the doctor, Lisette has a sore throat.' That was the style of our intercourse.

"The moment we ventured to transgress this narrow limit in conversation, a new outbreak followed. The presence of a third person smoothed matters a little, and served as a sort of go-between. I have no doubt but that my wife thought herself a very ill-used woman. As for me, I looked upon myself as a saint, as compared with her. The attacks of what we call by the name of love recurred regularly as before; perhaps they were a little more brutal, a little less refined; but they never lasted long, and generally gave way to periods of causeless irritation arising from the merest trifles. We had skirmishes

about the coffee, about the tablecloth, and about the carriage, on account of a pack of cards, or some other thing of no possible interest to either of us. My life was a continual boiling up of indignation. I fidgeted about the way she poured out tea, I growled if she trotted her foot, I found fault with the way she ate her soup, or if she blew on her coffee to cool it; and considered her slightest actions as crimes.

"It did not occur to me that these periods of irritation followed very closely our fits of love. We did see that our love and hate both were but two phases of the same passion. Life would have been intolerable if we had analyzed our feelings. The power of deceiving one's self is alike the bane and antidote, in an immoral life. My wife sought oblivion in eager, absorbing occupations, in the care of her household, in the dress of herself and her children, in their education and their health. She devoted herself to all these, as if her very life, and that of her children, depended on nothing else.

"I saw plainly that in all this she sought forgetfulness, as I did in hunting, gambling, and politics. But I had other solaces: tobacco, which I smoked incessantly; wine, which I drank to excess, but which never affected my head. Brandy or vodka before each meal, and Champagne or Burgundy with every course, so that my senses wandered in a perpetual fog. All these modern theories,—hypnotism, of mental malady, and of hysteria, are nothing but folly, but none the less dangerous on that account. Charcot, no doubt, would have pronounced my wife an hysterical patient, and he would have told me that my condition was abnormal, and would have put us both under treatment.

But all this 'mental malady' was nothing but the result of an immoral life. We suffered for our sins, and to ease our pain of mind we resorted to all kinds of devices which the doctors diagnosed as *hysteria.*

"Neither Charcot nor any one else could work our cure. We were impervious alike to advice or bromide of potassium. The origin of the evil remained to be discovered, just as if one sits down on a nail; if one discovers the nail, they find the cause and the effect. The nail, in our case, represented the irregularity of our lives.

"We were like two convicts chained together, the rust of whose fetters eats into their flesh and poisons their blood. I did not know that most married couples passed their lives in like fetters. But accident decides all our lives, regular or irregular. At the very moment when it seemed that life could no longer be endured, we were forced to return to town for the education of our children."

Posdnicheff was silent awhile, and I thought I heard two heavy sighs, which sounded like restrained sobbing; then, as the twilight darkened around us, he resumed:

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

"In town the unhappy feel their misery less. One may live a hundred years there without being noticed, or die in a month without exciting any remark. One hasn't the time to reflect on one's fate. Bnsiness, society, art, the health and education of our children fill up our existence. There is always some one to see, or something to do. In this world of excitement we feel the misery of life poignantly; and, at least at first, there is always one unfailing resource — the settling down in a new home, and the arrangement of our new surroundings.

"We lived thus one winter. The next season an incident happened, which, although it passed unnoticed, was the cause of everything that followed. My wife was delicate, and the rascally doctors persuaded her that the birth of another child would endanger her health, and showed her how to avoid it. I was thoroughly disgusted, and at first objected strongly; but she treated the matter lightly, but with so much determination, that I was forced to give way, and our degradation became complete.

"The peasant and the artisan have need for children, and that is in some degree a justification for their conjugal relations. But we have no such need. One, or, at least, two, are quite enough for us. It is useless trouble, useless expense, and entails a division of property. So there is no excuse for our brutality. But we are so deeply degraded

that we don't even see the necessity of an excuse. Most people in society give themselves up to this sort of debauchery without remorse. The only fragment of conscience that remains to us is the dread of public opinion and of the law. But in this case our conscience does not reproach us. Nobody in society can find fault with it, because everybody is equally guilty. What is the use of multiplying paupers and depriving ourselves of the pleasures of society? Let women of the lower orders and soldiers' wives throw their brats into the ponds, or into sewers, and go to prison for the offense. We find safer and more secret means of compassing our ends.

"And so two years passed. The advice given by our good friends, the doctors, had evidently succeeded. My wife had gained in flesh, and put on the beauty of the early autumn. She knew it, and neglected no means of enhancing her loveliness. Hers was now that ripe luxuriance that is even more attractive to men than the freshness of her spring. She had all the splendor that surrounds a woman of thirty who lives well and bears no children. The very sight of her made men tremble. She was like a spirited horse kept too long in stable, and all at once ridden without a curb.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

Posdnicheff's countenance seemed transfigured: his eyes glared with a strange expression: his beard and mustache seemed fairly to bristle, and his mouth grew tigerish.

"Yes," resumed he, "her form had filled out under her new conditions, and her anxiety about her children seemed to disappear. She looked like one who, awakening from a long stupor, felt with delight that the world was full of pleasure which she had never tasted till now.

"Ah, if those pleasures were not so evanescent!

"'But when the autumn is past and the winter appears, the time lost can never be regained. Let us enjoy life while we can.' That was what she thought, or rather what she felt. How could she think or feel otherwise? She had been brought up in the idea that love was the only thing in the whole universe worth a thought. She had known something of this love in the early days of our marriage; but not all that she had been led to expect. Her children had brought her unexpected disappointments and pains. But now, thanks to her complaisant physician, she had learned that she could dispense with children: once more she could live for the only thing that made life happy—love. But love for a husband whose temper was soured by jealousy was no longer her ideal. She dreamt of quite another sort of affection—at least, I suspect that she did. She looked around, as if she antici-

pated some event, or some person. I saw it plainly, and I could not repress my anxiety.

"One day, it happened that in conversing with me through the intervention of a third person—that is to say, in chatting with another, but meaning all she said for me, she gave it as her opinion—not remembering that scarce an hour before she had said quite contrary,—half in jest and half in earnest, that maternal anxiety was all rubbish; that no one but a fool would sacrifice their life for their children, and that youth was the time for enjoyment. From that time forth she took less interest in her children and more in herself. And although she pretended not to do so, she grew more and more infatuated with amusement, and the care of her own charms and accomplishments. She set herself eagerly at work practising the piano, which for years had been neglected. It was there, at the piano, the tragedy had its beginning.

"The *man* appeared!"

Posdnicheff appeared troubled, and again I heard those deep-drawn sighs. With an effort he went on:

"This man was a scoundrel; I do not say so because he wrecked my life, but because his after conduct was vile and cowardly. He was a musician, a violinist; not a musician by profession, but half artist and half man of the world. His father, a small country gentleman, had owned an estate close to mine, but had been ruined by unfortunate speculation; and his children, three boys, were thrown on the world. The youngest, of whom I now speak, had taken refuge with his godmother in Paris. Showing some musical talent, he had entered the conservatory, and now was a somewhat well-known violinist who played at concerts."

As if to check himself when on the point of speaking ill of his enemy, Posdnicheff stopped short for a moment, then hurriedly went on :

"To tell the truth, I don't know how he lived ; but this year he came to Russia and called on me. Heavy-lidded, almond-shaped eyes, a red-lipped, smiling mouth, a neat little waxed mustache, hair cut in the latest fashion, one of those faces women admire and men despise ; a slight but not badly-shaped figure, too much developed about the hips, like a woman ; familiar and insinuating in his address, but possessing tact enough to prevent him going too far, with a good deal of superficial dignity ; with that Parisian style which reveals itself in dainty buttoned boots, bright colored cravat, and a certain air of subdued foppery, which has its effect on women. His manners and language were agreeable, but his voice had a false ring in it, as if he wished to convey his ideas by hints and innuendoes instead of frankly speaking out like a man. Such as he was, and aided by his musical gifts, he was the cause of all that followed.

"On my trial the crime was attributed to jealousy — but there was something else. The court decided that I was a deceived husband, and that I had slain my wife to avenge the stain she had cast on my honor (that was the court's version of it), and so I was acquitted. I tried to explain the matter from my point of view, but the court came to the conclusion that I was trying to rehabilitate my wife's character. Her relations with this musician, whatever they may have been, are of no interest to me ; nor to her — now. I have told you everything of importance. The whole tragedy is due to the arrival of this man at a moment when

an abyss gaped between my wife and myself, and the slightest impulse sufficed to engulf both. If it had not been him, it would have been another. If jealousy had not moved me to crime, some other passion would have done it. I insist upon one point: that any husband, whose married life was like mine, must either live a life of gallantry, separated from his wife—kill himself or her, as I did. If there are any exceptions to this, they are rare, because the end came with me. I had often come very near suicide, and my wife had frequently tried to poison herself.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

"To make myself clearly understood, I must tell you how this state of things came about.

"We were leading a moderately tranquil life. Events were running on smoothly enough, when we suddenly found ourselves involved in discussion as to the course to be pursued in the education of our children. I cannot recall, at present, how my wife and I began the dispute, nor what expressions we indulged in; but the argument took at last a personal turn, and we abused each other roundly.

"'I told you so! That's the way it has always been!'

"'You said that—'

"'No, I didn't.'

"'Oh, then, I'm a liar, I suppose,'—and so on.

"I felt that a crisis was coming; that in the end

I should either kill my wife or myself. I felt that I dreaded her presence as a man dreads fire. I tried to restrain my rage, but it got the mastery.

"My wife was in a like fury; she knew that she was wilfully distorting my words, and that her own dripped venom as the fangs of an angry snake.

"She reviled all that I held dear, and profaned the sanctity of my innermost thoughts. The longer our quarrel lasted the more bitter it became.

"I cried angrily: 'Silence! Confound you!'—or words to the same effect. She rushed from the room in a whirlwind of rage, and ran to the children. I seized her by the arm, and continued to swear at her, which was a great mistake on my part. She screamed out:

"'Children, your father is beating me!' I roared, 'You lie!' She went on hurling falsehoods at me, for the very purpose of driving me out of my senses still further.

"'Oh! it's not the first time you have struck me, you wretch, you coward!'

"The children flew to her, and tried to pacify her. I said, 'Here, stop all that make-believe?' She answered back: 'Make-believe, indeed! You half murder me, and then cry out Make-believe.' Now, at last, I see what a brute I have tied myself to, and I wish I was dead!'

"'I wish to God you were,' said I. I shall never forget how I shuddered when I heard that horrible word issue from my lips. I could not have believed that it was possible for me to utter such a vile thought, and I was shocked at myself. I fled to my room, threw myself into a chair, and began to smoke a cigar to calm myself. Presently I heard her going out. I opened the door, and shouted:

'Where are you going to?' No answer. 'No matter,' said I to myself, 'let her go to the devil,' and went back to my cigar.

"Plans of vengeance and of separation whirled through my brain, as I smoked cigar after cigar. I dreamt of flight, of escape, of running off to America—anywhere, to get rid of her. I revelled in the thought of liberty; rejoiced in the idea of loving some other woman of a different pattern. I planned how to divorce her, or kill her, and the two ideas jostled in my brain, and still I smoked on.

"The usual household life went on its weary way. The children's governess came to me, and asked: 'Where is madam? When will she be back?'

"The servants asked me when they should bring up the tea.

"I went into the dining-room. The children gazed at me with horror, and Lisette looked as if she were trying to ask me something, but was afraid. Still my wife did not come. The evening passed, still she came not. My soul was filled with but two thoughts—hatred for her, and the fear that she would do something rash. But where to look for her? At her sister's? No! A man looks so stupid when he goes about asking 'Where is my wife?' Well, Heaven help her. If she wants to make herself miserable, let her do it. But then supposing she has not gone to her sister's. Supposing she has already—

"Eleven! Twelve! One o'clock! Where can she be? I could not sleep, I could not even lie down. What a dreadful thing it is to watch and wait alone! I tried to read, to write. Impossible! I am alone, tortured by suspicion, full of anger, and I listen and think. I throw myself on a sofa,

and towards morning I drop into a troubled sleep. I wake up with a bound. She has not returned. The house affairs go on as usual, but everyone looks at me, astonished, with a question in their eyes. The children gaze reproachfully at me, and always I tremble for her—and hate her.

"About eleven in the morning her sister arrives as an ambassadress. Then begin the conventional phrases.

"'Oh, she was in such a state'!

"'Where is she'?

"'Has anything happened to her'?

"I talk of her evil temper, and I vow that I am not to blame, and that I will let her go her own way, and make no advances. If she wants a divorce, so much the better—she shall have it.

"My sister-in-law will not hear of such a thing, and goes away without accomplishing her mission. As soon as she has gone, I go into the drawing-room, and see my children frightened, miserable, in a pitiable state, and I feel almost inclined to give in, and take the first steps towards reconciliation. But my word restrains me. I have sworn I would not, and I won't. I walk up and down. I smoke more cigars; I drink wine and brandy at breakfast, and succeed for the moment in disguising from myself the shame of my position.

"About three in the afternoon she came back. I flatter myself that she is conquered. I begin to explain that her reproaches had roused my anger. She replies, with a severe and lowering countenance, that she has not come back for an explanation, but for her children, and that we can live together no longer. I answer that she has only herself to blame.

"She looks at me as a judge looks at a criminal, and says, in a solemn tone: 'You will be sorry for your brutality.'

"I tell her that I don't want any stage heroics. Then she rushes into her chamber, muttering some inarticulate words.

"I hear the key turn. She has shut herself up. I try the door. It is locked. I knock. No answer. I depart furious.

"Half an hour afterwards Lisette runs to me in tears.

"'I can't make mamma hear. I am afraid.'

"I go to my wife's door and try to push it open. The lock yields and the door opens. My wife is lying dressed on the bed, with an empty phial of opium in her rigid fingers. Horrified, we bring her back to consciousness. Then follow tears, kisses, reconciliation; in our inmost souls the old hatred slumbers. But our domestic life takes its weary course. This is one scene out of many, and all precisely alike. Once I plucked up courage to go, but by some inconceivable weakness I did not put my determination into action.

"And under such auspices the 'Man' appeared —a bad man, truly, but no worse than I.

"When we moved into town, this man this Troukhatchevsky, called on us with the object of renewing the friendship that formerly existed between our families, and addressed me in a style of familiarity that I thought uncalled for; in fact, I did not like the man. At the very first glance I perceived that his morals were loose and his sentiments vulgar. I felt a strong disinclination to bring him and my wife together, but by some strange fatality I found it difficult to act towards

him as my feelings prompted me, and I did not repulse his friendly advances. It should have been very easy for me to receive him politely but coldly, and to let the acquaintance drop ; but no, I talked to him about his art, and as to his plans in returning to Russia. He reminded me that in former times I had been an enthusiastic amateur of the violin myself. I answered that I had given up music, but that my wife was an excellent performer.

" Why is it that in the most critical moments of a man's life, when his fate is in his own hands, his judgment deserts him? From the first moment of our meeting I felt a presentiment that evil was to come from our intercourse. And yet I chatted with him in a friendly manner, and even introduced him to my wife. She was delighted, at first, I honestly believed, for the mere pleasure in anticipation of hearing him play the violin, of which she was very fond. In fact, she had frequently engaged a performer from the theater orchestra to play with her. But happening to glance at me she divined my thought, and immediately hid her own. Then commenced a game of cross-purposes. I smiled pleasantly, pretending I was charmed with the idea, while he looked at my wife. He looked at my wife as all such fellows do upon an attractive woman, all the time seeming interested in the subject of conversation ; that is to say, in a subject to which he was utterly indifferent.

" She assumed an air of indifference. My look of jealousy (which she knew so well), and which I could not conceal, and the dreamy voluptuousness of his eyes, evidently troubled her. From that moment a subtle understanding arose between them which betrayed itself in every glance.

"We chatted of music, of Paris, of all sorts of trifles, till at last he rose to go. Hat in hand, he stood glancing sometimes at her, sometimes at me, as if waiting for something. At this critical moment of my fate my judgment left me. I need not have invited him to call again—then nothing would have come of it. But I would not acknowledge to myself that it was possible I could be jealous of such as he, and I urged him to come again that very evening, bring his violin, and play with her. She looked at me with astonishment; her color came and went as with a sudden fright. She began by refusing, saying she was out of practice. This seeming unwilliness confirmed my obstinate folly. I remember now the curious feeling that came over me as he turned to quit the room, and I noted the whiteness of his neck, and the jet black hair so foppishly divided down the back of his head, as he departed, picking his steps daintily like a bird.

"When we reached the hall, knowing that my wife could hear me, I begged him to be sure and come that evening, and to bring his violin. He promised to do so, and took his departure. When evening came, he came with his fiddle. But at first the music hung fire. They couldn't find the piece they wanted, and what we had was too difficult to play without practice. I watched their game. I proffered my advice. I smiled amiably, and they played some of Mendelssohn's songs without words, an easy sonata by Mozart, and other musical trifles. He played like a master; difficulties vanished before him, and he had that rare quality of tone, firm yet sympathetic, that one hears only from the true artist. His very face changed while he played; he became serious, wrapt in his art. As a performer,

he was very much stronger than my wife, and he helped her, advised her, and even criticized her, but politely, and mingling reproof with praise. As for my wife, she seemed to think of nothing but the music. Her manner was simple and pleasant. During the whole evening I pretended, and almost succeeded in persuading myself, that I enjoyed their playing; while in very truth, I was racked with jealous torments each time they looked into each other's eyes.

"My sins had found me out; had my own past not been vile, I could not have fathomed his thoughts. But I had gazed at other women as he did at my wife, and I understood him. The thought consumed me. I felt that her feeling for me was that of perpetual irritation, with rare intervals of sensuous love; and this stranger, thanks to his elegance of person, to his brilliant talent, to the mysterious charm of music over a susceptible, nervous temperament, must, of necessity, not only fascinate, but, in the end, bend her to his will.

"Seeing and feeling all this, some unknown power outside of my will caused me to assume a forced amiability, while in my soul I hated him. One of two things I felt I must do: kill him or 'gush' over him. I chose the latter. I praised his playing, I talked of old times, of my regard for his father, and invited him to dine with us on the Sunday following, when I would have some musical friends to meet him.

"Two or three days later, I came home chatting with a friend, when in the hall I felt suddenly oppressed, as if with a heavy weight, without knowing why. The truth was, that, in passing through the hall, I had noticed something that brought *him* to

my mind. It was only when I reached my own room that I discovered what it was, and I rushed into the hall to satisfy my doubt. Sure enough, there was his coat (without being aware of it, I had taken particular notice of everything about him). I questioned the servant. Yes, he had called, and was now with my wife. To reach the drawing-room I had to pass through the children's nursery; my little daughter Lisette was sitting with a book. The old nurse, with the youngest baby in her arms, was at the table doing something to amuse it, — I don't exactly remember what. From the drawing-room rippled a soft *arpeggio*, accompanying his subdued voice. He spoke in a low tone, evidently asking something, which she refused. I heard her say, 'No, no! Don't ask it!' And then the piano, as if on purpose, drowned her words.

"My God! what rage possessed me. When I remember what a fiend I was at that moment, I am seized with terror. My heart stopped for an instant, and then began to beat like a sledge-hammer. My first feeling, as is always the case in such terrible moments, was profound pity for myself. 'She dishonors me,' thought I, 'before the faces of my children, before the very eyes of my servants. I can bear no more; I must go. God only knows what I might do if —. But I must see for myself.' The old nurse looked at me, as if she understood all, and warned me to restrain myself. 'I must see for myself,' I repeated, and without further delay I opened the door. He was sitting at the piano, flourishing over the keys with his long white fingers. She was standing up, studying an open score. She saw or heard me first, and looked me full in the face. Was it terror or hardihood that

inspired her? In either case, she neither moved nor trembled; she colored up, and that was all.

"'I am so glad that you have come? We cannot agree upon the music for to-morrow,' said she, in a quite different tone than what she would have employed if we had been alone.

"This tone and the way in which she said 'we' shocked me. I greeted our visitor in silence. He grasped my hand with what seemed to me a mocking smile, and went on to explain that he had brought some music to try over for the little concert for the next night, and they could n't agree upon the choice of pieces—whether to select light, popular music, or pieces in the classical school, especially Beethoven's celebrated 'Kreutzer Sonata.' As he spoke, he looked at me so naturally, so simply, that I could find nothing to object to. And all the time I knew that he was lying, that they were both conspiring to deceive me.

"The social conditions that permit a great and dangerous familiarity between a man and a woman under certain pretexts, occasion the most poignant torture to a jealous mind—and in our social life who is not jealous? A man is laughed at if he objects to see his wife careering round a ball room in the arms of a fop, or objects to their secret confidences with their physician, or the familiarity of art, or above all, music. Surely there can be no reason to find fault with the innocent familiarities that result from a mutual devotion to the noblest and purest of all the arts—music? Nobody but a fool could see anything in that. A husband has no right to poke his nose into these artistic secrets. Yet everybody is aware that these harmless associations lead to others not quite so innocent.

"My company was evidently not wanted; we all three felt ourselves in an awkward situation. I tried to speak, but my words came in such a flood that I could not give them utterance. I wanted to curse the fellow, to drive him from my house, but I lacked the power. I felt I was in the way, that I had no business there; and so again, thanks to that curious feeling that seemed to force me to treat him the more politely the less I liked him, I said that I agreed with his taste, and advised my wife to follow his instructions. He stayed just long enough to do away with the unpleasant impression that my unlooked for coming and my astonished face had caused; then he went away with a satisfied air. As for me, I felt perfectly sure that the question of music had not been the subject of their conversation. I accompanied him to the door with scrupulous politeness—why should not one accompany to the door and part pleasantly with a man who comes to destroy his domestic happiness? So I shook that white and soft hand as if it were the hand of my dearest friend."

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

"For the rest of the day I could not bring myself to speak to her. Her presence provoked such hatred that I feared to trust myself. At dinner she asked me, before the children, when I was going to leave town. I had previously spoken of an important appointment in a neighboring village. I told her the date of my departure. She asked me if I required anything for the journey. I did not answer her. And when dinner was over, I shut myself up in my study, to which of late she never came. Suddenly I heard steps in the corridor. A dreadful but contemptible idea entered into my head; I thought that, like the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, she wanted to hide a sin already committed, and therefore came to me at this unusual hour. 'Is it possible?' thought I. 'Can she dare?' And as her steps came nearer, I thought, 'If she comes to me, my suspicions are right.'

"A feeling of inexpressible hatred clouded over my soul. The footsteps came nearer, nearer still. Would she pass my door? Now it opened, and her graceful, sinuous figure appeared in the doorway. In the expression of her face, her eyes, there was a timid, appealing look that she tried to conceal, but which I saw and understood. I held my breath to almost suffocation, and without removing my eyes from her face, I quietly lit a cigarette.

"'What is the matter?' she said, sitting down beside me, and leaning her head on my shoulder.

'I want to talk with you, and you go on smoking.' I recoiled from her touch with disgust.

"'You don't want me to play on Sunday, do you?'

"It is all the same to me whether you do or not."

"'Do you think I can't see?'

"'I congratulate you on your clearness of sight But if you take pleasure in disgracing yourself I'm d——d if I do!'

"'Oh! If you are going to swear like a common isvotschik, I shall leave you.'

"'Then, go! But remember one thing, that if my honor is nothing to you, it is everything to me. And you! You may go to the devil!'

"'What! What is the matter with you?'

"'Go! go! For God's sake, go!'

"She never moved. Was she pretending to, or did she really misunderstand me? But she flew into a rage.

"'You are getting worse and worse every day. It is impossible to put up with it any longer; but after your brutality to my sister (a little domestic incident which I had quite forgotten) nothing will astonish me.'

"'So I'm to be dishonored, humiliated, and outraged, and then to be held responsible for it all,' thought I. And a feeling of rage and hatred, such as I had never known before, took possession of me. For the first time in my life I felt that deeds, not words, could express my rage. I jumped up. I was losing all control of myself, lashing myself into fury, my brain burning with passion.

"'Go!' I cried, seizing her by the arm, in a terrible voice. 'Go, before I kill you!'

"'What are you doing? Are you mad!' cried she.'

"'Go!' roared I, still more violently, my eyes flashing fire, 'or I will not answer for myself. Go! go, I say!' Giving way to my fury, I felt a mad desire to beat, to kill her. But restraining myself by main force, I rushed to the table, caught up a heavy paper-weight, and dashed it violently at her feet. Then as she turned to fly, I seized a massive candlestick and hurled it after her, (taking good care not to hit her,) and tearing the barometer from the wall, I brandished it and shouted: "Go! I tell you; go, before I murder you!'

She vanished, and my frantic demonstrations ceased. An hour later the old nurse came to me, crying that my wife was in hysterics. I went to see her. She was laughing and sobbing by turns, uttering incoherent cries, and trembling violently. There was no pretense here, all was stern reality. The doctor was sent for, and all night I watched beside her. Toward morning she grew calm, and under the influence of the feeling we call love, we kissed and forgave each other. The next morning, after the reconciliation, I confessed I had been jealour of Troukhatchevsky. She took it all as a joke, and laughed in the most natural way in the world, at the idea that I could possibly pay her such a bad compliment as to imagine that she could be tempted by such a fellow as that.

"'How could you imagine that your loving wife could have any thought in common with such a man, except his music! But to please you, I won't see him again, even on Sunday, although we have so many people invited. Write and say I am not well enough to see anybody. That will put an end to it all. There is only one thing that annoys me: it is that anyone should think that there was dan-

ger in him. I should n't like people to think that, you know,'—and she believed it. She wanted to provoke contempt for him by her own words, and to defend herself. But she did n't succeed. Everything was against her; above all, the confounded music. And so the quarrel ended, and our guests assembled to hear my wife play accompaniments to Troukhatchevsky's fiddle.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

"I SUPPOSE by this time you will have found out that I was a very vain fellow. If it was n't for vanity there would be nothing to live for. So on this Sunday, I was busy displaying my taste in the dinner, and the arrangements for the concert to follow. I had sent in all sorts of delicacies, and chosen all the guests, who arrived punctually at six o'clock. Among the very first was Troukhatchevsky in full dress, with diamond studs in his shirt—in the worst possible taste. His manners were perfectly easy; he talked with a contented smile, as who would say, 'Everything you do and everything you speak is just what I expected of you.' I remembered that I noticed all his little defects of dress and demeanor with a malicious pleasure, because they seemed to mark his inferiority to my wife, and the impossibility, as she herself had said, of her descending to *his* level. I would not permit myself to be jealous, because jealousy caused me too much agony.

"But while dinner lasted, and during the evening till the music began, I involuntarily watched their slightest movements and their most trivial looks. The dinner was like most dinners, conventional and stupid. After a while the music began; he brought out his violin, shewent to the piano and rummaged among the music. How well I recall all the happenings of that evening! I remember how he opened his violin case, removed the covering embroidered by some woman's hand, and began to tune the instrument. I see again the assumed indifference under which my wife concealed her extreme nervousness, due, no doubt, to her consciousness of inferior talent. She sat down to the piano, and then began the usual giving of the pitch, the sounding of the *la*, the *pizzicato* of the violin, and the setting out of the music. Long afterwards I remembered how they gazed at each other, and cast a glance on their audience as the guests took their seats. A few words passed between them, and then the music began. They played Beethoven's 'Kreutzer Sonata.' Do you know the first '*presto*' movement? Ah!"

Posdnicheff heaved a heavy sigh and was silent awhile.

"That sonata is terrible, above all, the *presto!* And music in itself is more terrible still. What is it? Why does it affect us so? They say that music moves the soul. Nonsense! Lies! It has an overpowering influence, at least on me; but it does not ennoble—it excites. How shall I express it? Music makes me forget my real self. It transports me into a state of being not my own. Under its charm I seem to feel that of which in truth I feel nothing; to understand that which I

cannot comprehend; to see that which is dark to me. It is like yawning or laughing though broad awake. I yawn when others yawn, though sad; I laugh when others laugh. Music transports me. I am translated by it into the same state of mind that the composer was in when he wrote it. My soul is lost in his, and together they pass through all the emotions. I cannot tell why, but he who wrote the 'Kreutzer Sonata' — Beethoven — knew why he wrote it. He found himself in a certain train of mind; that train of mind led to certain actions, and so for him there was a cause; but for me— none! none! And that is the reason why the excitement of some music has no definite end. You hear, for example, a military march; soldiers pass to the sound of that march, and there is an end. A dance is played; the dance once over, the music stops. A mass is sung; you receive the Sacrament, and the choir sinks into silence. But another kind of music arouses emotions, and duty and emotion do not go hand in hand. That sort of music is dangerous; it leads no one knows whither.

"In China music is an affair of state, and rightly so. Should we allow the first comer to hypnotize one or more women and control their will, especially if the operator was an immoral man? Music is too powerful a weapon to place in the hands of every one. For instance, take this 'Kreutzer Sonata,' the first *presto*, and there are many like it. Can you play that in a drawing room among *decolletee* women, or at a concert? Can you finish the piece, acknowledge the applause, and go on with the next thing on the programme? No! This kind of music must be played in secret, under peculiar circumstances, and only in such cases as will har-

monize with its excitement. But to provoke a sentiment uncongenial to the time and place, and leading to nothing, cannot fail to be dangerous. Upon me, in particular, this piece has a fearful effect. It would seem as if new feelings, new emotions, were born in my very soul — I seemed to have found a new existence, a fresh inspiration.

"Thus spoke my soul as I listened to that music. I could not account for this new feeling that came over me. I only knew that I was happy. My wife and *he* shone in a new light. No thought of jealousy now! I was translated into an unknown world where jealousy had no place.

After the *presto* came the *andante;* rather commonplace, with old-fashioned variations, and a somewhat weak *finale.* Then, at the request of the guests, they played 'Ernst's Elegy,' as also several other things, — all well enough; but nothing could efface the impression produced upon me by the magical *presto,* that made me happy and light-hearted for the rest of the evening.

"Two days afterwards I left town; and, while bidding me good-by and carrying off his scores, Troukhatchevsky asked me how long I should be away. I concluded from that that he saw the impropriety of coming to my house during my absence, and that pleased me. He would have left town before my return, so we said farewell and parted. For the first time I grasped his hand with sincerity, and thanked him for the pleasure he had given us. He took leave of my wife at the same time, in a perfectly natural and easy manner. That evening, after his departure, we felt nearer to each other than we had for a long, long time.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

"I LEFT home in good spirits and in an easy frame of mind. My duties occupied me fully. I lived a busy but contented life. On the evening of the second day I received a letter from my wife, telling me about the children, giving news of my uncle, of the old nurse, and among other things, in a perfectly natural way, that Troukhatchevsky had called at the house, bringing the music he had promised her, and proposing to practice the sonata together once more, which, however, she had refused to do. I did not remember that he had promised her any music, and I was under the impression that he had taken definite leave. So this information gave me a disagreeable surprise. I read the letter over again, and this time it seemed to me that there was something tender and timid in the style, and the impression I received from it was painful. I felt oppressed; my heart beat rapidly; the devil of jealousy woke from its trance and began to gnaw my vitals. But I determined to rid myself of him, and in the words of the tempted Christ, say, '*Vade retro, Sathans!*' And after all, what could be more natural than her letter! I went to bed flattering myself that I was at ease. I turned my business affairs of the day over in my mind, and went to sleep without further thought of her. But I could never sleep soundly in a strange bed. And this night I awoke up more quickly than usual. My first thought was of my wife, of

Troukhatchevsky, and what might have happened between them. My heart contracted with rage, but I tried to forget. 'What nonsense, though. I have no reason to suspect them. Why should I humiliate my wife and myself, especially myself, by imagining such horrors? A mere hireling fiddler, known to be a loose liver, and a woman of rank, the mother of a family — *my* wife! How absurd!' But the demon whispered: 'It has happened to others, why not to you!'

"'Why not to me? Was not the simple and easily understood feeling with which I had married, and with which I had lived with my wife, the only thing that I wanted from her? And why should not this fiddler want the same? He is not married.' (I remembered the animal relish with which he ground his meat with his white teeth, and how greedily he sipped the wine with his red lips.) Damn him! I thought of his well-groomed, his well-fed person, and that his sole creed was self-worship, and his sole ambition pleasure. There was a bond between those two — music! the highest refinement of sensuality. What was there to stop them? Nothing! What was there to bring them together? Everything! I only knew my wife as an attractive animal, — and there is nothing that will restrain an animal at certain stages of their existence. I remembered the expression when, after the Kreutzer Sonata, they played an impassioned movement, impassioned to the verge of lewdness.

"How could I have left them together! How could I have left them alone, with full freedom to indulge themselves? How she smiled on that memorable evening, feebly, pitiably, but happily. How their eyes dropped when they looked at each other,

and they smiled imperceptibly. The remembrance of that faint smile filled me with terror. The demon whispered in my ear, 'Yes, it is all over!' But another voice replied, 'Are you mad? The thing is impossible.'

"I could not lie quiet in the darkness with these horrible misgivings. I rose, struck a match and lit a cigarette, and smoked one after another, to stupefy myself, and not to see these irreconcilable contradictions. I didn't sleep a wink the whole night, and when the clock struck five, although it was still dark, I made up my mind I could no longer endure this tension, and I would start for home at once. The train was to leave at eight o'clock. I woke my servant and sent him to look for horses. I wrote to my colleague to say that I was called back to Moscow on pressing business, and begged him to fill my place by some other member of the Council. At seven o'clock I got into a *tarantass* and started.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

"THERE were twenty-five *versts* to make by road, and eight hours by train. By road the travelling is very pleasant. There was a slight autumnal chill in the weather, and the sun shone brightly. The carriage wheels left a track in the light hoar-frost; we followed a winding road in the bright sunshine and the bracing air. The *tarantass* was comfortable, and the sight of the horses, the varied land-

scape, and the travellers who occasionally passed us, diverted my mind from the object of my journey. Sometimes it seemed to me that I was going on and on without any definite purpose, and that I should go on and on, to the world's end, and I was happy in the fancy. When it flashed across my mind whither I was really going, I dismissed the thought, and said to myself: 'Time enough when I get home.'

"When I got half way, an incident occurred that distracted my thoughts still more. The *tarantass* broke down, and had to be repaired. The delay in looking for a blacksmith, the repairing of the *tarantass*, the cup of tea at the village inn, settling the bill, and the chat with the landlord amused me. Towards nightfall all was ready, and I set out again. Travelling in the twilight was much pleasanter than the journey by day. The moon was in its first quarter, there was a slight frost, the road was still good, the horses fresh, and the driver jolly. I enjoyed myself, thinking little of what lay before me, as the flame springs up before it expires.

"But this tranquil state of mind, this power of casting away care, ended when I got into the train. Those eight hours of railway travel were so terrible that I can never forget them while life lasts. Was it because, on getting into the railway carriage, I felt so near my journey's end; or was it because of the irritation caused by the noise and clatter of the train? Be that as it may, from the moment the engine gave its scream at starting, my imagination ran riot. A series of mental pictures, each more vivid than the others, passed rapidly through my brain; pictures of what might have happened while I was away. I was burning with indignation

and rage, and in a state of mind during which I drank deeply of the bitter cup of humiliation; and yet I could not efface them, nor cease to look at them, nor refrain from calling them up.

"The more I gazed on these imaginary scenes, the more they seemed like reality. One would have said that some malignant demon whispered in my ear the most horrible suggestions. I remembered with a sort of triumph the conversation I had held with Troukhatchevsky's brother long ago. I had asked him if he was in the habit of going to improper houses, and he had answered that there was no need for a good-looking fellow to frequent such places, when there were always plenty of nice girls ready to fall into his arms. And his brother fiddler had found his nice girl in my wife! 'True, she is not in her first youth; she has lost a tooth one side of her mouth; she has a wrinkle or two coming,' I said, putting myself in Troukhatchevsky's place, 'but what of that? I might go further and fare worse.'

"It is impossible, Such a thing could not happen. Has she not told me that the idea of my suspecting her with such a man was humiliation? But she lied when she said so. And again the wearisome repetitions would begin.

"There were only two travellers with me in the carriage—an old woman and her husband, neither of them inclined to talk. And even they got out at the next station, leaving me like a wild beast in his cage. I started up, I looked out of the window, I staggered up and down the carriage, as if my impatience could hasten the speed of the train, which rattled and clattered on just as ours does now."

And Posdnicheff started up, took a few hasty steps, and once more sat down.

"I have a dread of these railway carriages, and hate them. I sat down again, and I said to myself, 'I must think of something else. The landlord of the inn where I had taken my tea, the figure of the *dvornik*, with his long beard and his little grandson, came to my mind, a child about the age of my little Basil. 'My little Basil! He will see that fiddler kiss his mother. What thoughts will that bring to his poor little mind? But she, what will she care? She has her lover!'

"And now again the cycle of tormenting thoughts began its everlasting round. More than once I was tempted to throw myself on the rails, and end it all. One thing alone held me back: pity. Pity for myself, joined with hate for her. Towards him I felt a strange sentiment of my humiliation and his victory. But for her nothing but hate!

"I could not kill myself and leave her free. She must pay me dearly for the misery she had caused me.

"At one station I went to the lunch counter for a glass of vodka. A Jew was drinking beside me. He spoke to me, and in my loneliness I joined him in a third-class carriage, dirty, smelling of bad tobacco, orange skins, and sunflower seeds. There, sitting down beside the Jew, I listened to an interminable flow of gossip.

"First, I did not pay any attention to what he was saying. He resented my indifference; then I got up and entered my own carriage.

"'Let me see,' said I to myself. 'Let me see if what I think is true; if I have any reason to torment myself.

"I sat down, intending to reflect quietly; but instead of calm reflection, the old round com-

menced. Instead of reason, came the same series of pictures.

"'How often I have gone through the same misery,' thought I, 'and for no cause! Perhaps, nay, I am sure that I shall find her sleeping tranquilly; she will wake up rejoiced to see me, by her words. In her looks I shall see that nothing has happened, and all my misery has been in vain.' Ah, if it should be true. 'But no,' said a voice in my ear; 'that had happened too often; the end has come.'

"And again it would all begin. Ah, what torture! If I wanted to inspire a young man with a hatred for women, I would let him look into the depths of my soul, and see the demon that dwelt there.

"The worst of all was the thought that my wife's body, mine by right, was possessed by another, and I was powerless to reclaim it. If she had not been guilty, at least she had wished to be, and I knew that with her the deed followed close on the thought. Better far that the worst should have happened than this dreadful uncertainty!

"I cannot tell what I really did wish. I wanted that she should be unwilling and yet willing. It was all a paradox."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

"At the last station but one, when the conductor came in to take our tickets, I stood on the outside platform, my misery intensified by the knowledge that the end was near. I was cold as ice, and my teeth chattered. When we arrived at Moscow, almost unconsciously I left the carriage, entered a cab, and drove home. I looked at the people on the streets, the signs over the shops, without realizing them. After awhile my feet began to get cold, and I remembered that in the railway carriage I had taken off my woolen socks and put them in my travelling bag. Had I got it with me? Yes; and the trunk?

"I found that I had forgotten my luggage. I felt for my check, but decided that it was not worth the trouble to go back. For the life of me I can't tell why I was in such haste. I only know that I felt that some great event in my life was about to happen. It was a true intuition. From whence did this presentiment come? I cannot tell; perhaps since it has happened the events that went before have shared in the gloom.

"I arrived at my own door. The clock was striking one; some *isvotcheks* were loitering about, attracted by the light in the windows and waiting customers, (the lighted windows were those of our drawing and reception-rooms). Without asking myself why these windows were lighted, I ascended the steps, always with the same sense of coming evil,

and I rang the bell. The hall porter, a good, hard-working, stupid fellow called Gregor, opened the door. The first thing that struck my eyes, in the hall, was a great coat hung up among other garments. I knew it!

"I asked Gregor 'who was in the house,' and when he mentioned Troukhatchevsky, I inquired if there were any other guests, and he replied, 'None.' I remembered that he said it in a tone as if to please me and dissipate my suspicions, so I said, 'And the children?' 'All well, thank God, and fast asleep,' he replied.

"I breathed with difficulty, and I felt my lips tremble. So it was as I had expected! I had sometimes felt on coming home as if some misfortune were hanging over me, and had been mistaken; all was as usual. But this time I was not mistaken. All that I had dreamed, my worse fancies were realized.

"I could have wept aloud, but the demon whispered in my ear, 'Weep, give way to sentiment, and they will separate quietly, leaving you with no proofs of their guilt, nothing but suspicion,' and pity for myself fled, leaving nothing behind but the brutal need of action. Swift and sudden I became a wild beast, but a cunning one.

"Gregor was about to announce me, but I stopped him, giving him orders to call a carriage, take my check, and go fetch the luggage. He went along the corridor to get his coat. Afraid that they might take alarm I went with him to his room, and waited till he was muffled up. As we passed the dining-room, there was a murmur of conversation and the rattle of knives and forks. They were eating. They had not heard the bell. 'If they only stay as they are,' thought I.

"Gregor put on his overcoat and fur collar, and went out. I closed the door after him. When I found myself alone a feeling of anxiety came over me, thinking that time for action had come. But how to act? I did not know yet. I only knew that all was over, that there could be no doubt of her guilt, and that in a moment more all would be finished between her and me. On former occasions, I have said to myself, 'Perhaps I am mistaken; my suspicions may be unjust.' Now all doubt had gone. Her guilt was plain. Alone with him at night! That was enough; and yet the very audacity of her action, the insolence of her crime, might go far to prove her innocence. I feared but one thing—that they might escape, and invent some new falsehood to deprive me of material proof, and the wretched satitfaction of punishing them—of executing them.

"So as not to disturb them, I went on tiptoe to the dining-parlor, not through the drawing-room but by way of the corridor and the children's sleeping chambers. In the first, the little boy was sleeping peacefully; in the next, the old nurse was moving uneasily in her slumber, and seemed likely to awaken. I thought of what her thoughts would be when she knew all, and pity for myself seized me so sharply that I could not keep back my tears. Not to awaken the children, I fled with light footsteps to my study. I threw myself on the couch, and sobbed violently. I, an honorable man,—the son of such parents as mine: I, who all my life had dreamt of domestic happiness, who had never betrayed any one—and my wife the mother of my children, kisses a fiddler because he has red lips! No! she is not my wife—she is a wretch—a shame-

less wretch! by the side of her children, whom she pretended to love. And that loving letter she wrote! Perhaps all women do the same. The very children she said were mine may have been engendered by lackeys.

"Who knows?

"If I had waited till tomorrow, she would have met me with a smile, with her hair in order, with her corsets on, all smooth and neat after her night of pleasure, with her graceful and indolent gait (I saw in fancy her lovely but deceitful face), and the demon of jealousy would have made his lair in my heart for evermore, and torn its fibers asunder one by one. What will the nurse say, and Gregor, and poor little Lisette? She is beginning to understand. Oh, the immodesty, the lying, the brutal sensuality that I know so well!

"I tried to get up, but I could not. My heart beat so violently that I could not stand. If I should die of an apopletic stroke, 'tis she who would have killed me. That is what she would like to do. What would she care about such a trifle as murder? But she shall not enjoy that luxury. I will live—for revenge! They are there, steeped in their debauchery—and I am prepared for vengeance.

"Yes, although she is no longer in the springtime of her youth, I did not repulse her.

"'Never, save when her health might suffer—her precious health? Why had not I killed her then?' thought I, as I recalled the scene of last week, wheu I had ordered her out of my study, and thrown the furniture after her.

"And I remember the condition I fell into afterwards. I not only remembered, but I experi-

enced the same bestial desires now—and, horrified, I felt that there must be no more delay, that the time for action had arrived; and all thoughts, except those that prompted me to violence, passed from my brain, and I grew calm, cool, and determined, as man and beast do in the face of a danger that cannot be avoided; without hurry, but also without delay, and looking to the end.

"The first thing I did was to take off my boots, and then, in my stocking feet, I mounted on the couch to the wall on which were suspended fire-arms and daggers of various patterns. I selected one, a Damascus curved blade, sharp as a razor. I drew it from the sheath, and I remember that the scabbard slipped from my hand and fell on the couch, and I thought, 'I'll look for it after, it won't do to lose it.'

"Then I took off my great-coat, which I had worn hitherto, and with stealthy step crept silently *thither*. I do not know whether I walked or ran, or through what rooms I passed; how I neared the dining-room, or opened the door, or entered—I remembered nothing—nothing.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

"THE expression of their faces at the moment I opened the door was such that I shall never forget. The picture must have been conveyed by the optic nerve to my soul. I remember that it caused me a most painful joy. It was the expression of horror, and it was this provocation that I needed. Never can I forget that appearance of terror, that look of desperation which was betrayed by the lines of their countenances in the first moment of my intrusion.

"I believe he was sitting at a table; but suddenly jumped up as he perceives my entrance, and stood leaning against the closed door. His features betrayed but the expression of desperation. Her features showed a like expression of horror—but still another. And had it not been for the other, had the first one only been present, probably that which has happened would not have happened. But in the deep lines of her visage there was manifest, at least so it seemed to me, a feeling of discontent and anger. Yes, anger that the love intoxicant had been suddenly removed. Yes, anger that the enjoyment of this intoxication had been disturbed. That look seemed to say, 'Oh, allow me to enjoy these moments of bliss—do not disturb me.'

"But these expressions were of short duration. Horror immediately yielded its place to a look of interrogation. He looked at her questioningly: 'Can we lie or not. If not, we must use some

other means. But what can we do?' Such were their unexpressed thoughts. She dared not answer him. She seemed angry and discontented. She felt sorry for his plight. Only one moment I remained standing on the threshold, carrying the dagger behind me. That very moment he smiled at her, and with a tone of indifference he remarked:

"We have played a little."

"Quite unexpectedly," she said, interrupting him, and imitating his tone. But neither *he* nor *she* ever finished those remarks. That very fury which I once before experienced, which I was longing for, grasped me. Again I felt the need of giving powerful interpretation to this wrath, this 'saviour of my honor.' And why did they not finish their remarks? Because like an unshackled demon I rushed upon her, still concealing the dagger behind my back, so as to brook his interference. Like a bird of prey I soared down upon her, keeping him well in sight, to strike that fatal blow. He suddenly, noticing my intentions, throws himself between us, and cries pitifully, "Be sensible! for God's sake! Help! I free my arm, rush upon him without saying one word, I must have looked demoniacal for he blanches to the very roots of his eyes, his lips quivering, and to my great astonishment slides underneath the piano and through the door into the hall. I wanted to follow him but for the weight on my arm. It was *she.* I try to throw her off, but she clings tighter to me; I cannot get loose. This unexpected obstruction, her weight, her fear, and her repulsive entreaty, irritate me to a still higher pitch. I feel that I am beginning to rave, to appear mad, and I gloat over it. I let my left hand swing with full force. She parries; un-

luckily my elbow strikes her square in the face. She yells and lets go of me. I still want to pursue *him*, but I feel I will make a laughing stock of myself to chase my wife's lover in stocking feet; I do not want to appear ridiculous, I want to appear terrific. Notwithstanding my terrible rage I kept my presence of mind, and the thought how others would view my action played a prominent rôle in shaping my course.

"I look for her. She had sunk down on the sofa, covering her discolored eyes with her hands. I look at her, and cannot see anything but hatred and fear in her countenance. Not a ray of remorse. No. She hated me as her enemy—she loved him as her friend. And here I might have stopped, if she had remained silent. But suddenly she rises, grasps the hand in which I hold the dagger, and says: 'Be sensible. What are you going to do? What is the matter? No wrong, nothing has happened here during your absence, I vow it!'

"I yet hesitated, but the last words, from which I drew the contrary conclusion, that is, that some wrong had been committed, demanded some reply. And the reply should be commensurate to the stage of my torture, which was rising in *crescendo*. This fury must find a victim for satisfaction—it only then can subside, it only then can lapse. For rage also has its law.

"'Do not lie, woman,' I cry in pain, and seize her arms with my left hand. But again she disengages me. Then I clutch her throat with my left, the right hand still holding the dagger behind me, and violently drag her down. I am choking her. She buries her nails into my hand, and wrestles to secure her release. I make one feint, and then

bury the dagger into her left side. When people contend that man in a rage or fury loses consciousness, I proclaim it a falsehood, a lie. I retained full presence of mind. I was conscious of every act, of every word. In fact, the stronger the rage grew the clearer was my perception of the work I had to perform. Every second I knew what I did. I do not claim that I knew beforehand what I intended doing, but the very second that I committed the act, I was aware of it. I remembered the thought that led me on, and it was bridled with the possibility to still allow her a chance of remorse —and if she repented might have stopped when the point of the poinard touched her stay. I knew that I was stabbing her under the rib, and that the dagger must pierce. But the very moment that I was forcing the dagger into her body, I was aware of the terrible deed I had done, and the frightful results it would bring forth. So the consciousness of this further urged me on, like a hurricane fans a conflagration, and the act followed. I recognized the consequence as a result of the act. I remembered even feeling the resistance of the corset stays and other things. I could feel the dagger cut into the soft flesh.

"Long afterward and during my stay in prison, and when I had undergone a moral revolution, I thought again of *this* moment, and remembered what I could still then have done, and how I at that moment reviewed everything. I can still feel the sensation of that moment preceding the terrible act, the awful consciousness that I was killing, that I had killed a woman, a defenseless woman, my own wife. The horrible aspect of such a consciousness is still in my mind. I recollect and I will tell

all, although my memory on that point is faint, that after stabbing her I pulled the dagger out again to undo the deed. But it was too late. She springs up and cries, 'Nurse, he has murdered me!' The nurse, having heard some noise, appeared in the door. I stand over her, watching what I had done to her. I did not believe it. But look! a thick stream of blood is gushing from her side, and I understand that it can no longer be undone, that I intended killing her, and I did it. I wait until she falls to the floor, and the nurse comes to her rescue, exclaiming: 'For God's sake, what has happened!' I throw the dagger away. I leave the room. I say to myself, 'No excitement, for you must know what you are doing.' The nurse cries and calls the chamber-maid. I walk through the hall and send the servant to the nurse. 'And what am I to do?' I ask myself. Everything is clear to me. When I first enter my room I go straightway to the closet, take down the revolver, examine it to see if it is loaded, and lay it on the table. I pick up the sheath of that dagger that had fallen behind the sofa. Then I sit down. Sit without thinking. I remember sitting a long while.

"Suddenly I hear noise outside. I hear somebody's carriage stopping at the door. I hear another arrive. Then I hear and see Gregor bringing my hamper. 'Those things will come very handy! Have you heard what has happened?' I ask. Tell the porter to notify the police.' He says not a syllable and walks out. I get up, take a cigarette and start smoking. Before I finish this cigarette, I become sleepy and I lie down. I sleep two hours. I dream we were on such friendly terms, we had a dispute, and although we do not become reconciled

we were happy. I remember how natural the dream seemed to me. Why should we not be on friendly terms. But alas! knocking at the door awakens me. 'Probably the police,' I thought in awakening. 'I have killed somebody, I believe—and still, Is it she, and nothing has happened? Again I hear somebody knock; I do not answer. This question occupies me; Has anything happened. Yes, it has happened. In the imagination I feel the resistance of the corset, and then—oh yes, it has happened. Yes, it has happened. 'And now I shall commit suicide,' I say to myself. I say it, and still I know that I will not kill myself. Another knock at the door—I must see who that is. But there is no hurry. I will first put the revolver and sheath away. I cover them with a newspaper. I withdraw the bolt. I open the door. It is my wife's sister, the good-natured widow.

"'Wassia, what have you done?' she says; and her crocodile tears flowed.

"'What do you mean?' I replied, nonchalantly. 'Wassia! she is dying. It is true, for Ivan Federowitsch said so.' This individual she referred to was a doctor, *her* doctor and *her* adviser.

"'Where is he?' I asked; and the old rage seemed to again start boiling.

"'Wassia, go to her—please go to *her!*'

"'Go to her?' I say to myself—'*yes!* I ought to go. Every murderer should beg forgiveness from his victim, every husband should see his wife in her last moments. Yes, it is a general rule, and I must observe it. I'll go!' I follow her. I am already thinking of the expression and opinions of the others. 'Wait a moment,' I shout to her; 'it looks so bad to be in stockings, I will put on my slippers.'

"It all seemed so strange and wonderful. Again as I left my room, and was walking through the well known rooms, the hope that nothing had happened awoke in me. But the smell of chloroform and other drugs brought me to my senses. Something had surely happened. Passing through the hall and into the childrens' room I saw little Lisa. She looked at me with reproachful eyes. A servant opens the door of our bed-room from the inside. I enter. My eyes first see a light gray dress, stained with dark blood, on the chair. On our double bed she lay with knees drawn up. She was lying slanting on pillows. Her chemise was open. The wound was covered. There was a sickening chloroform smell in the room. Her face was swollen and bruised beyond recognition. This was the result of the accidental blow she had received from my elbow. I pitied her for her bruised face, and regretted having so disfigured her. All beauty had vanished — no, she even then appeared horrid. I stopped on the threshold.

"'Come in, come nearer,' her sister said to me.

"'Perhaps she repents,' I thought. 'Will I forgive her? Yes, I should forgive her, for she is dying.'

"I approach the bed. She raises with great difficulty her eyelids, both of which are black, and with great difficulty stammers.

"'You have accomplished your purpose; you have killed me.'

"Even in the throes of death her countenance betrayed that same hatred which she had always felt for me.

"'The children—I will not give—you—anyhow. She (her sister)—should have them.'

"Not a word did she say what to me was heart-rending—not a word did those dying lips lisp about deceit and innocence. And how I longed to hear one word.

"'Yes, revel in what you have done,' and she sobs. At the door her sister is standing with the children.

"'Wassia! oh, Wassia, see what you have done!'

"I first look at the children, then at her bruised, swollen features. I can no longer gaze upon my brutal work. I sling away my rights, my pride. For the first time, the very first time, I recognized *her* as a human being—a sister. All that jealousy which had before seemed so gigantic now appeared dwarfish. I only now realized what I had done; I could not restrain my hand from grasping hers and saying,

"'Forgive!'

"She remained silent, her bruised lids covered the feverish eyes. Her strength was fast leaving her. Her face was twitching—not with pain, no, with the tremolo of death. She feebly pushed me away.

"Why had this happened? Why?

"'Forgive me;' I pleaded.

"Yes, if you had not killed me,' she suddenly cried in a feverish moment. 'Forgive! yes, if you had not killed me. But you have accomplished what you desired, and I hate you.' She became unconscious and delirious. In her delirium she cried:

"'Shoot!—Fire!—I am not afraid.

"'Shoot them all!—He is away,' she continued in this delirium. She becomes unconscious of all. She does not even recognize little Lisa, who came to her bed.

"At noon she died.

"At eight o'clock I was escorted to the police department and from there taken to jail.

"I remain a prisoner eleven months. For eleven months I wait for the decision of the court. For eleven months I reflect upon my past. For eleven months I see my deed, and for ten months and twenty-seven days I see my misdeed—my murder. On the third day I was taken—"

He could not finish the sentence. He could not repress the sobs and tears. After having eased his pain, he continued :

"I only discovered my sin when I saw *her* in the coffin—"

He again sobs, but soon continues :

"Only after seeing her poor face, I discovered what I had done. I then learned that it was I who had murdered her. I remembered that it was I who made a wife, a mother out of her, that it was I who made her a corpse. Oh, can you believe that I would have sacrificed my life and everything that is dear to me to bring her back? But it was too late. She was gone. He who has not experienced this terrible gnawing at his heart, he who has not been tortured with remorse, cannot understand the feeling."

* * * * * * *

We both remained silent. He sobbed, he wept, and he trembled, without saying another word. His face became thin and long, his mouth widened.

"Yes," he suddenly continued, "if I had known what I now know, it would have been different. I

would not have married. Never would I have married her."

Again silence reigned.

"Yes, dear friend, you have heard what I did, what I have lived for. Yes, we should learn to understand the real meaning of the fifth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew, that 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery'; and this refers not only to the woman; these words apply to the wife, to the sister; not only do they apply to the wife of another, but they relate especially to one's own wife."

A LETTER FROM COUNT TOLSTOÏ,

GIVING HIS REASONS WHY THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

Having received very many letters from persons who are perfect strangers to me, asking me to state in plain and simple language my own views on the subject handled in the story, and why I have written the book entitled "The Kreutzer Sonata," I shall now endeavor to comply with these numerous requests.

My views on the question may be succinctly stated as follows:—Without entering into details, it will be generally admitted that I am accurate in saying that many people condone in young men a course of conduct with regard to the other sex which is incompatible with strict morality, and that this dissoluteness is pardoned, generally. Both parents and the Government, in consequence of this view, may be said to wink at profligacy; and even in the last resource to encourage its practice. I am of opinion that this is not right.

It is not possible that the health of one class should necessitate the ruin of another; and, in consequence, it is our first duty to turn a deaf ear to such an essentially immoral doctrine, no matter how strongly society may have established, or law protected it. Moreover, it needs to be fully recognized that men are rightly to be held responsible

for the consequences of their own acts; and that these are no longer to be visited on the woman alone. It follows from this that it is the duty of men who do not wish to lead a life of infamy, to practice such continence in respect to all women, as they would were the female society in which they move made up exclusively of their own mothers and sisters.

A more rational mode of life should be adopted, which would include abstinence from all alcoholic drinks, from excess in eating, and from flesh meat, on the one hand; and recourse to physical labor on the other. I am not speaking of gymnastics, or of any of those occupations which may be fitly described as playing at work; I mean the genuine toil that fatigues. No one need go far in search of proofs that this kind of abstemious living is not merely possible, but far less hurtful to health than excess. Hundreds of instances are known to every one. This is my first contention.

In the second place, I think that of late years, through various reasons which I need not entertain, but among which the above-mentioned laxity of opinion in society, and the frequent idealization of the subject in current literature and painting may be mentioned, conjugal infidelity has become more common, and is considered less reprehensible. I am of the opinion that this is not right. The origin of the evil is twofold. It is due, in the first place, to a natural instinct; and in the second, to the elevation of this instinct to a place to which it does not rightly belong. This being so, the evil can only be remedied by effecting a change in the views now in vogue about "falling in love," and all that this term implies, by educating men and women

at home, through family influence and example; and abroad, by means of healthy public opinion, to practice that abstinence which morality and Christianity alike enjoin. This is my second contention.

In the third place, I am of opinion that another consequence of the false light in which "falling in love," and what it leads to, are viewed in our society, is that the birth of children has lost its pristine significance, and that modern marriages are conceived less and less from the point of view of the family. I am of opinion that this is not right. This is my third contention.

In the fourth place, I am of opinion that the children (who in our society are considered an obstacle to enjoyment—an unlucky accident, as it were) are educated, not with a view to the problem which they will be one day called on to face and to solve, but solely with an eye to the pleasure which they may be made to yield to their parents. The consequence is, that the children of human beings are brought up for all the world like the young of animals, the chief care of their parents being not to train them to such work as is worthy of men and women, but to increase their weight, or add a cubit to their stature; to make them spruce, sleek, well fed and comely. They rig them out in all manner of fantastic costumes, wash them, over-feed them, and refuse to make them work. If the children of the lower orders differ in this last respect from those of the well-to-do classes, the difference is merely formal; they work from sheer necessity, and not because their parents recognize work as a duty. And in over-fed children, as in over-fed animals, sensuality is engendered unnaturally early.

Fashionable dress to-day, the course of reading,

plays, music, dances, luscious food, all the elements of our modern life in a word, from the pictures on the little boxes of sweetmeats up to the novel, the tale, and the poem, contribute to fan this sensuality into a strong, consuming flame; with the result that sexual vices and diseases have come to be the normal conditions of the period of tender youth, and often continue into the ripe age of full blown manhood. And I am of opinion that this is not right.

It is high time it ceased. The children of human beings should not he brought up as if they were animals; and we should set up as the object and strive to obtain as the result of our labors something better and nobler than a well dressed body. This is my fourth contention.

In the fifth place, I am of opinion that, owing to the exaggerated and erroneous significance attributed by our society to love, and to the idealized states that accompany and succeed it, the best energies of our men and women are drawn forth and exhausted during the most promising period of life; those of the men, in the work of looking for, choosing and winning the most desirable objects of love, for which purpose lying and fraud are held to be quite excusable; those of the women and girls, in alluring them and decoying them into liasons or marriage by the most questionable means conceivable; as an instance of which the present fashions in evening dress may be cited. I am of opinion that this is not right.

The truth is, that the whole affair has been exalted by poets and romancers to an undue importance, and that love in its various developments is not a fitting object to consume the best energies of

men. People set it before them and strive after it because their view of life is as vulgar and brutish as is that other conception frequently met with in the lower stages of development, which sees in luscious and abundant food an end worthy of man's best efforts. Now, this is not right, and should not be done. And in order to avoid doing it, is is only needful to realize the fact, that whatever truly deserves to be held up as a worthy object of man's striving and working, whether it be the service of humanity, of one's country, of science, of art, not to speak of the service of God, is far above and beyond the sphere of personal enjoyment. Hence, it follows that not only to form a liason, but even to contract marriage, is, from a Christian point of view, not a progress, but a fall. Love, and all the states that accompany and follow it, however we may try in prose and verse to prove the contrary, never do and never can facilitate the attainment of an aim worthy of men, but always make it more difficult. This is my fifth contention.

How about the human race? If we admit that celibacy is better and nobler than marriage, evidently the human race will come to an end. But if the logical conclusion of the argument is that the human race will become extinct, the whole reasoning is wrong. To that I reply that the argument is not mine; I did not invent it. That it is incumbent on mankind so to strive, and that celibacy is preferable to marriage, are truths revealed by Christ 1,900 years ago, set forth in our catechisms, and professed by us as followers of Christ.

Chastity and celibacy, it is urged, cannot constitute the ideal of humanity; because chastity would annihilate the race which strove to realize

it, and humanity cannot set up as its ideal its own annihilation. It may be pointed out in reply, that only that is a true ideal which, being unattainable, admits of infinite gradation in degrees of proximity. Such is the Christian ideal of the founding of God's kingdom, the union of all living creatures by the bonds of love. The conception of its attainment is incompatible with the conception of the move ment of life. What kind of life could subsist, if all living creatures were joined together by the bonds of love? None. Our conception of life is inseparably bound up with the conception of a continual striving after an unattainable ideal.

But even if we suppose the Christian ideal of perfect chastity realized, what then? We should merely find ourselves face to face on the one hand with the familiar teaching of religion, one of whose dogmas is that the world will have an end; and on the other of so-called science, which informs us that the sun is gradually losing its heat, the result of which will in time be the extinction of the human race.

Now there is not and cannot be such an institution as Christian marriage, just as there cannot be such a thing as a Christian liturgy (Matt. vi: 5–12; John iv: 21) nor Christian teachers, nor church fathers (Matt. xxiii: 8–10), nor Christian armies, Christian law courts, nor Christian States. This is what was taught and believed by true Christians of the first and following centuries. A Christian's ideal is not marriage, but love for God and for his neighbor. Consequently, in the eyes of a Christian relations in marriage not only do not constitute a lawful, right and happy state, as our society and our churches maintain, but, on the contrary, are always a fall.

Such a thing as Christian marriage never was and never could be. Christ did not marry, nor did he establish marriage ; neither did his disciples marry. But if Chrrstian marriage cannot exist, there is such a thing as a Christian view of marriage. And this is how it may be formulated : — A Christian (and by this term I understand, not those who call themselves Christians merely because they were baptized, and still receive the sacrament once a year, but those whose lives are shaped and regulated according to the teachings of Christ), I say, cannot view the marriage relation otherwise than as a deviation from the doctrine of Christ — as a sin. This is clearly laid down in Matt. v : 28 ; and the ceremony called Christian marriage does not alter its character one jot. A Christian will never, therefore, desire marriage, but will always avoid it.

If the light of truth dawns upon a Christian when he is already married, or if, being a Christian, from weakness he enters into marital relations with the ceremonies of the Church or without them, he has no other alternative than to abide with his wife (and the wife with her husband, if it is she who is a Christian), and to aspire together with her to free themselves of their sin. This is the Christian view of marriage ; and there cannot be any other for a man who honestly endeavors to shape his life in accordance with the teachings of Christ.

To very many persons the thoughts I have uttered here and in The Kreutzer Sonata will seem strange, vague, even contradictory. They certainly do contradict, not each other, but the whole tenor of our lives, and involuntarily a doubt arises, "On which side is truth—on the side of the thoughts

which seem true and well founded, or on the side of the lives of others and myself?" I, too, was weighed down by that same doubt when writing The Kreutzer Sonata. I had not the faintest presentiment that the train of thought I had started would lead me whither it did. I was terrified by my own conclusion, and I was at first disposed to reject it, but it was impossible not to hearken to the voice of my reason and my conscience. And so, strange though they may appear to many, opposed as they undoubtedly are to the trend and tenor of our lives, and incompatible though they may prove with what I have heretofore thought and uttered, I have no choice but to accept them.

"But man is weak," people will object. "His task should be regulated by his strength."

This is tantamount to saying, "My hand is weak. I cannot draw a straight line—that is, a line which will be the shortest line between two given points—and so, in order to make it more easy for myself, I, intending to draw a straight, will choose for my model a crooked line.

The weaker my hand, the greater the need that my model should be perfect.

LYOF TOLSTOI.

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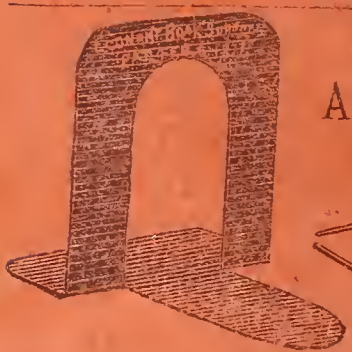

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